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THE THINGS THAT COUNT

LAURENCE EYRE

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Beulah hastily bent over her with a cry.

FRONTISPIECE. *See Page 214.*

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THE THINGS THAT COUNT

BY
LAURENCE EYRE
1

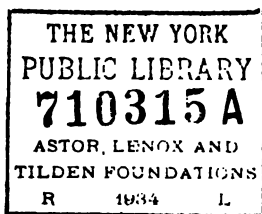
NOVELIZED FROM THE PLAY
BY THE AUTHOR

ILLUSTRATED FROM SCENES IN THE PLAY



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1915

To
WILLIAM A. BRADY
WHOSE SPLENDID FAITH MADE POSSIBLE
THE THINGS THAT COUNT
THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED

34X247

FOREWORD

IN the production of a play, nothing is of more vital importance than the selection of a title, and the coincidence by which this play came to be baptized is perhaps sufficiently remarkable to be recorded.

Mr. Brady, who has stood godfather to many of the big theatrical successes of the past decade, was particularly insistent on this point, for before the right title had been discovered, the play had been known under no less than three names. However none of them seemed to fit the situation, and finally, with the Metropolitan production only a few days distant, a wire from Mr. Brady brought me to New York to discuss the important question anew.

It was nearly midnight, at the close of a big production that Mr. Brady had just made in New York, and although we went over titles for several hours, we could arrive at no satisfactory conclusion. At last Mr. Brady proposed that I accompany him on the following day to Springfield, where he was making another production, to see if we could not come to some decision on the train.

It was Thanksgiving day, and the cars were filled with a holiday crowd on pleasure bent, but we sat all the morning, and steadily discussed titles. Fully a hundred and fifty must have been considered, and for one reason or another, discarded. At last we relapsed into a despairing silence, as the train pulled into Hartford, and for a change of thought, fell to watching the different types of people outside the window as they hurried to and fro on the station platform.

Mr. Brady called my attention to one such group. An old lady had left the train, to be greeted rapturously by a younger man and woman accompanied by a little girl. "Look!" said Mr. Brady, "It's the grandmother; she has come to spend Thanksgiving with her son and daughter, and the little girl is the grandchild." Then, turning to me, he said emphatically, "Now, those are the things that count."

The play had found its name.

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THE THINGS THAT COUNT

CHAPTER I

ONE WINTER'S MORNING

"MRS. HENNABERRY is not up yet."

The shabby little woman turned her disappointed face from the imposing white door, and crossing the street, entered Washington Square.

"She's still asleep, the lazy thing!" she murmured vindictively to herself, as she brushed the snow from one of the benches, sat down, and began a minute inspection of the Hennaberry residence opposite.

There it stood as it had stood for almost a century, dignified, respectable, self-possessed. There was no ostentation in the walls of modest brick, the curtains at the windows proclaimed immaculateness rather than price, and yet each prim window, each fat step leading to the front door, announced one attribute, self-sufficiency.

The front door; its white coat spotless, the mel-

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low silver knob and plate stamped with the honored name of Hennaberry, it most of all bespoke the individuality of the house; to the invited guest how hospitable, how cheery; to those on whom it had closed how coolly definite; not vituperative, not irritated — merely “Not at home.”

* * * * *

“Hasn’t Mrs. Hennaberry come down to breakfast yet?”

“Not yet, sir.”

“Dear me! I’ve quite an appetite!”

There was no sign of impatience in Mr. Hennaberry’s hungry voice. He accepted the situation as one accepts the decrees of destiny: he suffered but he did not resist. It is possible that in all New York no more pitiful figure of a husband could have been found that crisp winter’s morning than Jacob Hennaberry. For many years tact had been his fast companion through each eventful day, and resignation had drawn his nightly curtain at its close. Yet do not pity him too much. Is the slave who kisses the scourging rod entirely unhappy? Juggernaut’s wheels pass gloriously over the willing victim! As eagerly as the worshiper who hears afar off the voice of the god in the car, Mr. Hennaberry, encountering staid Abraham on

the stairs, asked, "Hasn't Mrs. Hennaberry come down yet? It's after nine o'clock, and I've had nothing to eat yet," he continued.

"Won't you start in by yourself, sir?" suggested Abraham sympathetically.

Mr. Hennaberry gave the old family servitor a reproachful glance over the top of his glasses. "Abraham! Have you forgotten what day this is? It's the anniversary — our thirty-sixth. You know I always breakfast with Mrs. Hennaberry on the anniversary."

Abraham coughed himself apologetically down stairs, and Mr. Hennaberry, not daring to trust himself too near the great walnut-paneled dining-room, where punctually at eight o'clock on ordinary occasions his own breakfast stood smoking on the table, made his way to Mrs. Hennaberry's boudoir.

It was a bright, cheery room. The gay yellow wall paper seemed to reflect the clear morning sunlight which streamed through the windows from across the Square, a fire crackled on the hearth, and over the mantel Abraham's careful fingers had hung a great wreath of Christmas holly tied with a scarlet bow.

By the fire was Mrs. Hennaberry's easy chair;

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at one side the sacred desk, which no hand but her own was allowed to touch ; before the window stood the tempting breakfast table.

For a time Mr. Hennaberry patiently sat by the fire and waited while Abraham laid a second place at the table. The minutes multiplied by fives and tens and finally half-hours ; ten o'clock struck. Ingeborg, a mature damsel from Sweden, who at the time held the world's record, — three years — as maid to Mrs. Hennaberry, appeared with a great armful of cut flowers, put the finishing touches to the room, and disappeared into the consecrated precincts of the bedchamber. Still Mr. Hennaberry waited.

At last, in a desperate attempt to still the pangs of hunger, Jacob looked about to find something wherewith to beguile the time. He did not meddle with the desk — he had had experience with that 'once before — but his eyes lighted on Mrs. Hennaberry's closet, a veritable glory hole, its shelves bulging with feminine treasures that dated back as far as the Civil War — a woman's life recorded age by age in keepsakes. If fate had stayed Mr. Hennaberry's hand on the knob of the closet door, this history of a New York family would have remained

unfinished to the end; but no one came to disturb the old gentleman in his investigation, and at last on one of the upper shelves he found a battered old pasteboard box with a faded label in German on the top. It was a box of old toy soldiers, the kind that came into fashion a quarter of a century ago.

Through a mist a picture swam before the old man's eyes: a golden-haired boy was there on his knees before the grate, those blue and scarlet heroes, fresh in the glory of imported German paint, were fighting the battle of Waterloo. The music of a phantom drum, mingled with a strident childish treble echoed through that room once more, before Jacob sighed himself back into everyday.

But when he presently stole down stairs to finish his vigil over the *Morning Sun* in the library, the battered old black box went along under his arm.

* * * * *

In the meantime a different scene was being enacted in a tenement house on Jackson Street:

"Where are you going to-day, mother?"

"Oh! a long way, dear; way over the bridge into Camelot."

Dulcie left her mother busy at her work, and

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pulling her little green chair up to the window, looked out. Less than a hundred yards away ran the river, lined with wharves and warehouses, a thoroughfare almost as crowded as Water Street with its surge of traffic from the Bowery headed for the bridge; craft of every description populated its surface; the ferries, like great shuttles in a loom, plied backward and forward weaving together the life of two great cities; and over it all floated the bridge to Brooklyn, a cobweb swung from reality to a dream city beyond the river.

The room in which the mother and child were sitting was painted a dull terra-cotta; a rough table, a kitchen stove, and a few chairs, these comprised most of the furniture of the place; yet everywhere were the evidences of a careful woman's hand. A cheap screen covered with pretty flowered calico hid the ugly stove, curtains of the same material were at the window, and a box of bright geraniums stood on the ledge. Another remnant of calico had been transformed into a cover for the heavy trunk with its label "Under Southern Skies Co. Theater." On the walls were a few good pictures, while photographs made homelike the corner by the desk. Clean-

liness, order, taste, — those were the watchwords. But why in such a place? Could the woman who had evolved a comfortable home out of such surroundings be content to remain as she was?

A flock of sparrows outside on the window ledge disputed the remains of Dulcie's breakfast which Beulah had just put there for their delectation.

"Good morning, nightingales," called Dulcie, waving her hand to the birds; but the sparrows were too busily engaged to notice, and only answered by shrill bickerings.

Dulcie turned toward Beulah. "Mother, why don't my nightingales have voices that charm the night? The nightingales in your stories always have voices that charm the night."

Now many mothers would have answered Dulcie that the little gray birds quarreling outside were only New York sparrows, but Beulah knew many things that ordinary mothers never know. She knew that the dingy warehouses by the river were really castles where knights and ladies dwelt, that the little mission on the corner was a mighty cathedral with sculptured arches and vaulted nave, that the bridge to Brooklyn was really King Arthur's very own bridge leading to many-towered Camelot; and

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all this she knew to be true because Dulcie herself had told her all about it. So she only smiled and answered, "Our northern winters are so hard on the throat; perhaps they have laryngitis?"

Dulcie looked puzzled. "What are laryngitis?" she asked.

"You'll have to ask the Court Physician that," replied Beulah laughing, as she gathered up her sewing and folded it into a neat pasteboard box.

She rose and with deft touches put her simple home in order before starting out for the day. Her slim, trig figure still had as much of the girl as of the woman, her eyes were brown, as was her hair; and it kept escaping in little rebellious curls from the strict bands in which she tried to imprison it, and made her look more girlish still. A woman little more than a girl and a six-year old baby with pale gold hair and tired, wistful eyes, strange lodgers for a two-room tenement, four flights up, on Jackson Street!

On went the shabby corduroy coat, and the old black velvet toque with the new red rose, and then came the hardest hour, saying "Good-bye" for all day.

"The bottle of milk and the bread and butter

are on the window ledge, baby, and you are to get them when the whistle blows."

"Yes, mother," came the wistful, brave response, and then as Beulah gave her a great hug, "Mother, where do you think my father, the prince, is to-day?"

"Oh! a long, long way from here, Dulcie," and this time Beulah's voice was unsteady too.

"My! it must be an awful long journey he's gone on. Do you think he might come back by this afternoon?"

"I don't know, dearest, we must be patient."

And now with Beulah gone, Dulcie began the other side of the double life she led. While Beulah was trudging over the bridge to Brooklyn and the work-a-day world, Dulcie accompanied by Guinevere, the faithful, battered doll companion of her adventures, climbed up to the window overlooking Camelot and entered into a country that was all her own, the pleasant kingdom of the imagination.

* * * * *

And though within the radius of a mile, these things were happening in worlds that in effect are as far apart as the poles, one cause was responsible for all; one powerful hand had set in motion the

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fast," she announced, with that conviction peculiar to those who have always enjoyed perfect health. "And I don't feel much better afterwards," she added as an afterthought.

"Abraham, take Lord Nelson and put him in his basket," she boomed, holding out a pathetic, white fluff of canine misery that seemed to shrink smaller under the burden of his appellation. Next she began her regular day by an inspection of her sanctum, and ordering all those things done which her well-trained servants had attended to an hour beforehand.

"While you are there by the window, Ingeborg, you might just put that shade a little higher," she said, addressing her Swedish factotum who had followed her into the room. Ingeborg raised the shade a few inches. "Lower — lower still — there, that's right," directed her mistress. The shade was now exactly where it had been at first, but Mrs. Hennaberry was satisfied; she had attended to it.

"Now I have a very busy day ahead of me and we must all hurry." Mrs. Hennaberry had a theory that people should not be idle. "Keep busy and you will have no time to be miserable" was her motto; so she generally saw to it that

those about her were supplied with little jobs to keep them happy. To watch Mrs. Hennaberry fold her hands with a sigh of contentment while an entire roomful sat happily and busily employed around her was to behold a true picture of duty done.

By this time she had reached her desk. "Let me see my calendar." She hastily ran her eye over the lines, arranging her campaign for the day. "Um! a meeting of the Ladies' Committee of the Society of Brotherly Love at two. I'll show those women a thing or two about running a committee before I'm done with them." Glancing about, her eye alighted on the second plate which Abraham had laid at the breakfast table. "Who is the extra place set for?"

"The anniversary, ma'am, Mr. Hennaberry," Abraham reminded her gently.

Mrs. Hennaberry sank into the chair at her desk and raised her eyes to the ceiling. "There! There you have it! A day like this before me and this is the day he chooses to remain at home and disarrange my plans. Why doesn't he go and attend to his business; that's what business was made for — so that men needn't stay at home and get in their wives' way. Every time that

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man takes a day off he upsets the entire house.” She turned to Ingeborg, who during this harangue stood casting tender glances in the direction of Abraham, and remarked with significance, “Ingeborg, thank heaven on your bended knees that you’re not married to a meddlesome old fool.”

It was an awkward moment for Abraham, who spent his days in an effort to ignore the open and determined designs of Ingeborg upon his liberty; for Abraham, perhaps warned by the dreadful example constantly before him, had hitherto clung to the joys of bachelorhood. Fear engulfed him as he saw Mrs. Hennaberry’s energies beginning to concentrate upon his special case, for well he knew that once aroused, his mistress was quite capable of marrying him off before breakfast if the idea should happen to occur to her.

But fortunately the day was saved by the appearance of Anna, the second maid, who came to announce that a lady had called to see Mrs. Hennaberry.

“Who is she?” asked Mrs. Hennaberry.

“She won’t give her name; she was here once before this morning.”

Mrs. Hennaberry dismissed her with a "Make her send up her card," and returned to her calendar. "My anniversary," she mused as her eye caught the date. "My wedding day — and Christmas eve." She sighed reminiscently. "We used to have good times on Christmas Eve," and her eye wandered to a portrait of a young man which hung above the mantel. "Poor Frank! poor Frank!" An expression that was mingled of pleasure and regret softened her features as she smiled up at the boyish, wayward face in the picture, and it was with a start that she came back to everyday when Anna returned to say, "The lady doesn't seem to have any card; but she told me to tell you her name is Egener."

"Flora Egener! Why it's my sister Flora, and we haven't spoken to each other in years." A triumphant gleam flashed into Mrs. Hennaberry's eye. "Show her right in."

"Now what do you suppose Flora Egener wants?" she said, addressing Ingeborg when Anna had left the room. "She's come for something unpleasant, I know that," she continued after a moment's thought. "She wants money, that's it! I told her so when she married that

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man, I knew how it would turn out; but she never would take my advice — always so bent on her own way. Well I shan't give her a penny, not a single cent." Then with that fine logic that has become synonymous with actions feminine — if there was one quality that Mrs. Hennaberry prided herself upon it was consistency — she beckoned Ingeborg to her. "Just run into my room, and in the top bureau drawer in the right-hand corner, you will find four new twenty-dollar bills. Bring them in and slip them to me." Ingeborg was by this time at the door, but Mrs. Hennaberry recalled her to add, "Ingeborg, if you let her see you doing it, I'll discharge you on the spot."

Ingeborg, who was used to being discharged on an average of forty times a week, placidly left the room.

Abraham thought this a good opportunity to ask if he might summon Mr. Hennaberry to breakfast.

"Not now, not now," cried Mrs. Hennaberry, in a flutter of excitement at the thought of meeting her sister once more. "He'll have to wait."

"But he hasn't had a mouthful, and he has been

up since eight o'clock," ventured Abraham, seeing no relief in prospect for his famished master.

Mrs. Hennaberry saw at once that Jacob must have immediate attention, and her eye swept the room to find the quickest medium to adjust his case. "There, take that orange, put it on a plate, and tell him to eat it," she commanded, and as Abraham executed the order, "Wait; take that banana too — that one." Then as Abraham started for the library, she added, "While Mr. Hennaberry is waiting, just ask him to look over the bills in the lower left-hand pigeon-hole. It will be something nice for him to amuse himself with while he waits." And she smiled contentedly, now feeling assured that Jacob was happy — and busy.

Anna announced Mrs. Egner.

A shabby, genteel little figure that we last saw sitting vindictively in Washington Square, entered the room. She was younger than Mrs. Hennaberry, her hair was dark and glossy against the other's gray, and her lines were concave instead of a generous convex; but there was more than a family resemblance between the sisters, as they stood and regarded each other in silence.

In dealing with those around her, Mrs. Henna-

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berry's plan of action was simplicity itself : first she attacked ; if that failed, then she eliminated. To be fair it must be admitted that very few ever withstood that first devastating charge ; breathless they allowed themselves to be subjugated and added to the busy train of the intrepid little woman. Some few had resisted ; they had swiftly become the eliminated. Of this number Flora Egener had been for many years. When as Flora Van der Donck, she had quakingly broken to the family her determination to accept the hand of a nobody, an outsider whose pedigree stretched no farther than Trenton — if indeed it might be said to stretch at all — her sister had risen in family council and settled the matter by flatly telling her she should not have him. Henrietta herself had chosen for consort a Hennaberry, and while she in no way considered that family the equal of the Van der Doncks — whose family tree, via the Battery, could be traced back in Holland to some mercifully remote period — and indeed often reminded Jacob of the fact, still he came of as good stock as New York, subsequent to the dispossession of the Dutch, could boast, and in consideration of special qualifications on Jacob's part for the

post he was required to fill, she felt that she must not expect too much. But an Egner from Trenton! A man who not only had no pedigree, but actually did not know enough to blush for the fact — never!

Appeals to her parents accomplished nothing for Flora. For many years they had been foremost in the ranks of the willing workers, indeed from a period dating not long after baby Henrietta had arrived to brighten their home.

If Flora and her suitor had known enough to use a little diplomacy, to affect a little yielding — for once Henrietta had got her way, she cared nothing farther about it — all might have been well. A few tears, a hint of consumption, and Mrs. Hennaberry would have been out buying the wedding trousseau with her own hands.

Flora did nothing of the kind. With years of secret revolt rising in her bosom, she married Edward Egner out of hand.

Then she was eliminated, swiftly, completely; the Van der Donck and Hennaberry households knew her no more; her name was not mentioned in the wills of Mr. and Mrs. Van der Donck.

Only once had she seen her sister since that time; when she had come to speak on behalf of

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another imprudent family match, that of Mrs. Hennaberry's own son, Frank Hennaberry. That meeting had again resulted in Mrs. Egner's defeat and utter rout. Memories of all this worked in her narrow breast as she stood and regarded her sister. How could she guess that under the impressive and domineering front that Mrs. Hennaberry presented, a warm desire surged to put her arms around her shabby relative and cry it all out.

As it was, Mrs. Hennaberry merely murmured stiffly, "Flora."

"Henrietta," returned Mrs. Egner with equal hauteur. With this they advanced gingerly and gave a peck at each other's lips that did duty for a kiss.

"Sit down, Flora," said Mrs. Hennaberry, waving her to a chair. Mrs. Egner sat down by the desk, while Mrs. Hennaberry adjusted her glasses and began a minute inspection of her sister's attire, from the cheap shoes to the unfashionable bonnet.

"You've changed a good deal," she began bluntly.

Mrs. Egner's eyes snapped. "We've neither of us grown any younger," she retorted sharply.

Mrs. Hennaberry realized that she had made a false start, but she was constitutionally unable to retreat.

"Go on, Flora, go on," she cried, transfixing Mrs. Egner with a look. "I can keep it up as well as you."

Mrs. Egner compressed her lips tightly and tapped the floor with her foot. "Well, I suppose you've guessed what I've come for," she broke out presently. "I can't help it; I'm dreadfully in need of money."

"I knew it!" exclaimed Mrs. Hennaberry triumphantly.

Mrs. Egner sprang to her feet. "There! I was sure you would say that! I think I'd better go." And she turned toward the door; but already Mrs. Hennaberry had her by the arm.

"Wait! wait! don't go," she cried contritely. "You always were so impetuous. Sit down, Flora." She gently forced her sister back into the chair; and realizing that she needed something to divert her mind, glanced about in search of some light occupation for her.

"While you are not doing anything, you might just as well take a few stitches in my embroidery," she said, fetching a square of linen from her

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work stand near the mantel. "I never knew anyone who could work rose leaves to suit me since you were married. Besides it will be something nice to amuse you while we talk," she added encouragingly.

Mrs. Egner gave her a look; but she took the embroidery and began to sew. She knew that embroidery of old. No one had ever seen Mrs. Hennaberry stick a stitch of any kind herself; but she always kept a piece of work on hand, and being a woman who received many visitors during the day, it was wonderful what a number of pretty and useful things she was able to turn out.

"Now tell me all about it," resumed Mrs. Hennaberry, seating herself.

"It's very hard on me, Henrietta, to have to come to you," began Mrs. Egner.

"You've always found me ready to forgive and forget, haven't you?" interrupted Mrs. Hennaberry.

"Forgive indeed!" sniffed Mrs. Egner.

"Yes, forgive; and I don't forget the last time we quarreled either," responded Mrs. Hennaberry with spirit. "You had no business to take my son's part against me."

Memories of that quarrel flashed back upon Mrs. Egner; the bitter words anent her own mismating. She rose, flinging the embroidery to the floor. "Henrietta Hennaberry, how dare you! I'll go. Good morning."

But already Mrs. Hennaberry had her by the arm. There were several pieces of information that Mrs. Egner was in possession of, and Mrs. Hennaberry meant to have them before she left the room.

"Stop! it's foolish of us to quarrel at our time of life," she said in a conciliatory tone. "Sit down, please."

"You always had the most aggravating ways of anyone I ever met with in my life," muttered Mrs. Egner angrily as she resumed her chair.

"None of our family was very strong on halos, Flora," rejoined her sister. "There's my embroidery on the floor."

Mrs. Egner picked up the needle work; but she planted every stitch as if it were a dagger that she held, and the fair linen surface the breast of Henrietta Hennaberry.

"Now tell me, what's the trouble?" resumed Mrs. Hennaberry, trying to assume a gracious expression.

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"Well, it's the children mostly," said Mrs. Egener. "There are five of them. Eddie, the eldest, is fifteen, and they range all the way down to little Henrietta, who is three."

For the first time Mrs. Hennaberry's face really softened. "Henrietta! why she's named after me!" she exclaimed.

"Yes," Mrs. Egener admitted it reluctantly. "Well, it's Christmas time; and we haven't had much of a Christmas since Edward was taken. The children have just about set me wild this year. I really don't know where to turn to. If Edward had only been able to keep up his Life Insurance —"

"I told you that man would never be able to —" interrupted Mrs. Hennaberry, and then quickly as she saw Mrs. Egener preparing to rise, "No! no! I didn't mean it. Edward had his good points; we didn't get along very well, but he had his *good* points."

At this juncture Ingeborg returned with the bank notes. With precautions elaborate enough to arouse suspicion in the dullest intellect, she hid them in a book, placed it by Mrs. Hennaberry's elbow, and left the room.

"Who is that?" asked Mrs. Egener.

"Her name is Ingeborg, she comes from Sweden, and she's a French maid," returned Mrs. Hennaberry in tones intended to reach the vanishing figure. "Now tell me, where do you live?" she resumed.

"At Flatbush," replied Mrs. Egener.

Mrs. Hennaberry shuddered. "How did you ever expect to get on, if you went to live in a place like that?"

"Have you ever been to Flatbush?" asked Mrs. Egener sharply.

"No; but I know by the sound that it is unhealthy," replied Mrs. Hennaberry. "Where are the children going to school?"

"The public school," snapped Mrs. Egener.

"Oh! Flora! Don't you know the public school is enough to ruin any girl's manner. If you had come to me, I could have told you of a dozen good private schools."

"I daresay! Giving advice is one of your strong points," muttered Mrs. Egener.

"And don't you need good advice?" demanded Mrs. Hennaberry, leaning forward in her chair. "Answer me that. Don't you — don't you?"

Mrs. Egener looked her square in the eye. "It's a pity you couldn't have wasted

some of your wisdom on your own family," she said.

Mrs. Hennaberry rose. "Well, don't think for a moment that I forget that it was owing to you that my son defied me and married a chorus girl."

Mrs. Egner also rose and faced her angrily. "She wasn't a chorus girl. She was a perfectly respectable actress. You ought to be proud to call her your daughter-in-law."

"That woman!" exclaimed Mrs. Hennaberry walking away. "I never have and I never will. She was the cause of my son's forsaking his mother and the station in life to which he was born. Forgive that woman? Never!"

"But there's a child," urged Mrs. Egner following her. "Your grandchild. What right have you to live here in luxury and let that child lack the common necessities of life?"

"I offered to take it when Frank died," replied Mrs. Hennaberry. "The mother refused to give it up."

"I don't blame her; you wouldn't let her come South to you with Frank when he was dying."

The shot told. Mrs. Hennaberry put her

hand to her heart, as if she felt a physical pain there. "Flora! I—I didn't realize that things were so desperate; I only remembered that she had taken Frank away from me."

Mrs. Egener gave a hard laugh. "Naturally she doesn't want you to do the same thing to the child," she said; but Mrs. Hennaberry cut her short with a wave of the hand.

"Stop!" she cried. "Don't speak to me of her. I have never even seen her. She is nothing to me, less than nothing. Frank! poor Frank!"

But Mrs. Egener's blood was up at last. In every encounter that she had ever had with her sister, she had come off second best; but this time she determined that she would not be downed. Like a small torpedo boat attacking a steel-clad, she charged on Mrs. Hennaberry. She followed as the old lady backed before the onslaught, she shook her finger in Mrs. Hennaberry's face. "You pity Frank; well, I don't. I pity Beulah. I've seen her if you haven't. She had her troubles even when he was alive. She nursed him and worked for him and waited on him. He came by his selfishness honestly."

"Flora, don't you dare to speak to me like that," panted Mrs. Hennaberry.

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"Won't I? I've never been afraid to speak my mind to you, Henrietta; and I'm not going to begin to toady to you now. You are a selfish old woman, just as you have always been."

"Flora, I command you," began Mrs. Hennaberry.

"Command away all you like. I'm not afraid of you or your money either," cried Mrs. Egner courageously. By this time she had Mrs. Hennaberry penned against the breakfast table.

"And do you think you'll get a penny of my money for your children, if you speak to me like this?" interposed Mrs. Hennaberry weakly.

But still the miniature tornado swept on. "I don't care whether I do or not; I'm going to have the pleasure of speaking my mind, come what may."

"You'll regret it," cried Mrs. Hennaberry, sinking into a chair.

"Selfish and dictatorial," continued the victorious Mrs. Egner, "bad-tempered and illogical," the accusing forefinger was at Mrs. Hennaberry's nose, "and obstinate as a mule! Good morning, Mrs. Hennaberry." And she swept out of the room with a bang, leaving Mrs. Hennaberry prostrate and almost apoplectic in her chair.



She shook her finger in Mrs. Hennaberry's face.

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F.

CHAPTER III

SOME OF THE ELIMINATED

ONLY one child had been born to the Hennaberrys, a son who became the idol of his parents' hearts; and yet foremost on the list of the eliminated stands the name of Frank Hennaberry.

You see it was all about Beulah Randolph; for until he met her, there was but one will in the house as far as he was concerned, his own. His mother might hector and domineer over others; but for Frank she had only smiles and approval in all that he did.

Had he but half expressed a desire, she was on the way to forestall him in obtaining it, though Rome burned to make a holiday. She listened to his opinions as if the Delphic oracle were in act of speech, and then used his arguments as battering rams against all her acquaintances: so that for some years Henrietta's doctrines were a reflex of the varied phases that a young man's mind goes through in the process of education, and her friends were often shocked to hear rank

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Socialism, Buddhism, Mysticism, and even Nihilism expounded from her lips. But to do Henrietta justice she paid very little attention to what any of it was about; and it must be admitted that no matter what side she happened to be on, the end of the argument found her equally victorious.

She little dreamed that the delicate, well-mannered boy was indeed her very son, whose will was more than a match for her own in obstinacy.

When Frank left home to enter the University of Pennsylvania, it was virtually the first time that he had ever been separated from his parents. Many were the secret tears that Mrs. Hennaberry shed over the parting; but Frank had explained that he owed it to himself to try his wings as other boys did, and she would have no other mother's son her boy's superior by a jot. She took the attitude that Mr. Hennaberry opposed Frank's going, and poor Jacob, in many a curtain lecture, was forced to pay the price of views that he had never entertained.

Frank's freshman year passed off smoothly. He brought his roommate, Stewart Marshall, who was taking the course in medicine, home

for the holidays; and the Hennaberrys took both the lads for a tour through Switzerland during the summer vacation.

It was while coming home for Christmas in his sophomore year that Frank first met Beulah. He left college not in the best of humors, for Stewart, deep in the grind of second-year medical, had decided that there was to be no holiday that Christmas for him. Frank had left the train at Jersey City, and as he was passing through the station on his way to the Twenty-third Street ferry, he saw a very pretty girl in an altercation with the ticket-taker at one of the doors. The girl seemed distressed and trying to explain, the man's voice was loud and insolent.

Frank stepped up and raised his hat. "What's the matter? Can I be of assistance?" he asked, addressing the girl.

"She can't go through unless she's got the ticket," interposed the ticket-taker in stentorian tones, that seemed to Beulah to resound from one end of the station to the other.

"It's very stupid," she confessed, scarlet with embarrassment. "They — my friends — the people I had expected to meet — seem to have gone on. My hotel bill was more than I had

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expected. The truth is I haven't got three cents for my ferry ticket. I have to be in New York for a re— an engagement."

"Let me lend it to you," said Frank pulling out a handful of loose change.

Beulah gave the young man a quick inspection, the glance of the woman who has learned that she must be on her guard with the men she meets, and the result seemed to be satisfactory. "Very well, I will. Thank you," she nodded. "I don't mind walking on the other side, but I can't very well swim, can I?" she added, with a whimsical smile.

The official was silenced, the ticket was purchased, and what more natural than that the two young people should stand together on the deck and chat away the sluggish trip across the river?

When the boat entered the dock with much clanging of chains, Beulah would have slipped away, but Frank, not daring to propose aansom, urged that he might stand treat to a car ride. "You'd better," he cajoled. "You're in debt anyway, and you might just as well owe me eight cents as three." So Beulah, feeling that in this case the lamb was slaughtered, took a

chance on the sheep as well. But once in the city, she no longer seemed at ease as on the boat ; she glanced around the car to see if anyone she knew might be aboard. Frank awkwardly tried to ask her if she were in need of funds, for the thought of her penniless in New York was terrible to him ; but she assured him that she was on her way to friends. Soon she became constrained ; her replies dwindled to "Yes" and "No" ; and when the car reached Broadway, she nodded a pleasant but decided "Good-bye" and left the car. In a moment she was lost in the crowd of Christmas shoppers ; but Frank went home to dream.

Six months went by. It was a sultry night half-way into June ; college was over and the family were to sail in two days for the other side. The house in Washington Square seemed strange and uninhabitable in its linen swathings ; and Mrs. Hennaberry was everywhere, examining, criticizing, and discharging everybody who would be discharged about every five minutes. So Frank slipped away as soon as dinner was over and wandered up-town to a musical show. Broadway looked dull and unnatural, a haze of stifling heat seemed to rise up from the asphalt ; even

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the electric signs seemed to shine with a dimmer glory, and the only signs of life about the theaters, in their chrysalis, summer state, were the gaudy posters marked "Opening in September," which proclaimed the birth of the new butterfly creations now hatching in the mammoth cocoons.

However, one of the season's most popular operettas was still defying the summer heat, and there Frank directed his steps. When he entered the lobby, the first person he saw was Beulah. She was stylishly but quietly dressed, and when he caught sight of her, she was speaking to the manager who stood hot and perspiring on one side of the entrance. Then she drew a card from her card case, the manager wrote something on it, and Frank realized that she belonged to that interestingly mysterious world that is separated from everyday by a strip of electric lights, and which is generally alluded to as "the profession."

Beulah, turning, recognized Frank almost as soon as he saw her; and by the time that he had reached her, she had a dime ready to press into his outstretched hand.

"Thank you so much," she laughed. "It's been on my conscience."

"It was only eight cents," protested the embarrassed Frank. Beulah shook her head.

"I've computed the interest very carefully," she said, and passing on to the box office, got her coupon and entered the theater.

But Frank was not to be discouraged so easily. He purchased a ticket and went inside too. He had gotten a seat in the center of the house, hoping that the little god of chance would favor him and put them together; no such good fortune befell him. But it was early, the theater was not more than half full, and he had no trouble in finding Beulah. She was sitting in the second row from the back and there was an empty seat beside her; so, taking the bull by the horns, Frank went over.

"Do you mind my chatting with you until the curtain goes up?" he asked. He had an engaging cordiality of manner that made it hard for people to rebuff him, and Beulah found herself saying, "Certainly not." He sat down and in five minutes they were talking like old friends. He learned that her name was Beulah Randolph and that on the stage she was known as Bettina Dennison; that she came from a small town in the Middle West, lived with friends

on Forty-fifth Street, and that this was her first season on the stage.

Frank himself was not so candid. He told her his name and of his life at college, but he felt instinctively that Beulah was the sort of girl who would hesitate before accepting the attention of a rich man's son; and so he gave her to understand that he was of very moderate means and working his way through college. It seemed to him to add another touch of romance to an episode whose greatest charm was its unreality. He was quite right about Beulah. In fact before the rising curtain sent him to his allotted seat, misgivings as to how she should have acted were beginning to disturb her; and when Frank hurried up the aisle after the first act, he found her place empty, nor did she return during the rest of the evening.

For a second time she had come out of the unknown, and as abruptly had disappeared again. But Frank was his mother's son, and was capable of short stretches of indomitable perseverance. He had only one day to work before his sailing and not many facts to go on; but by nine o'clock next morning he was on the job, and the consequence was that at three o'clock

a huge box of roses was delivered at Miss Dennison's address in West Forty-fifth Street, and at four Frank Hennaberry's card went upstairs in the firm clutch of an untidy-looking servant girl. Five minutes later card and roses descended the stairs under the same escort. On the card Beulah had written, "Please don't make me regret having accepted a generous and friendly offer."

Frank sailed next day, but a change had come over him. His parents were the first to perceive it, and this was really the beginning of an estrangement between the mother and son. Mrs. Hennaberry was not used to having secrets kept in her family; and her efforts to penetrate the matter encountered in her son a silent resistance, an aloofness that first petrified and then enraged her.

Mrs. Hennaberry's heart was right as a trump; but her head was wrong as wrong could be. She commanded where she should have cajoled, she stormed where she should have sympathized. The trip became uncomfortable; there was no Stewart Marshall along that year to throw his hale and hearty six feet into the fast widening breach. Frank abruptly quitted the party in

evenings were no longer free. She was to play in near-by city theaters for several weeks before going on the road; but rehearsals still consumed the better part of the day, and she saw comparatively little of her new friend.

Frank wanted to come to the theater every evening and play escort home, but Beulah would not allow it. The consequence was that Frank's time hung heavy on his hands. Alone, he had too much time for dreams; the fire that was smoldering in his youthful veins blazed up. It ended in a hot avowal of his feelings and a proposal that Beulah should become his wife.

The instantaneous "No" that sprang to Beulah's lips surprised herself. She liked Frank — had perhaps in an impersonal sort of way realized that something of the sort might some day happen — but it is in crises that we come into sudden knowledge of what we feel and what we are. The rise of passion in Frank left her cold, and with one desire, to get away. Yet when she was alone, compassion woke within her a wish to make amends for what her conscience told her she should have foreseen and forestalled.

A repentant note begging forgiveness and a return of the old sensible relations, increased

her remorseful feeling; and she decided to see Frank again before she left the city, hoping that by the time that summer should bring about her return to town, absence would have solved these problems too intricate for her emotional arithmetic.

However, she was resolved to arrange the meeting so that there might be no chance of another confession. And again the long arm of coincidence encircled the pair.

It happened that one of the young ladies who had rooms in the house where Beulah lodged, filled in the gaps between intermittent dancing engagements by giving lessons in that accomplishment. Among her most profitable classes was one of young children in Brooklyn, and for several weeks during the early summer Beulah had taken charge of it when her friend was called home by illness in the family. She knew little about dancing, and did not dare to undertake the older classes; but the steps the youngsters were learning were not intricate, and her instinctive knack of getting on with children covered many deficiencies and soon made her prime favorite.

One family in particular had manifested an interest in Beulah; a bright-eyed little woman

with a flock of children, whose plain dresses still carried a touch of distinction in their antique folds and commanded deference to what she had been. Several times Mrs. Egener had taken Beulah home to a simple family supper when class was over; and even now, when summer had closed the lessons and Emma Brice was back preparing to resume her fall work, nothing would do but that the girls should spend a Sunday evening in Brooklyn before Beulah should have left town.

Here was the opportunity for which Beulah was looking. An answer was despatched to Frank's letter, asking him to call for them in the evening and see them safely to New York. The name of Egener and an unpretentious address in Flatbush, these conveyed nothing to Frank. His aunt was never mentioned in the family, and beyond a vague notion that there was some such person, he knew nothing about her. Mrs. Egener was just as innocent as to whom the visitor was to be, for Beulah had merely mentioned that a friend would stop for them.

Imagine her surprise when the friend was introduced as Mr. Hennaberry. Explanations followed, and most of the evening was spent in ex-

change of family reminiscence between the aunt and nephew, during which Beulah, a silent auditor of the scene, became gradually aware of who and what her boyish suitor really was. Miss Brice's presence prevented an elucidation of affairs on the way home; but the lovers had an interview the next day, the stormiest that had ever passed between the two. Beulah accused Frank of bad faith; and faced with cold logic, he indeed found that he had wandered step by step into an impasse from which it was difficult to extricate himself. In short Beulah gave him his congée; and in spite of repeated attempts on his part, she left the city without seeing him again.

There followed a frantic time for Frank, and by a revulsion of feeling, the quarrel did more than anything to help his cause with Beulah. Alone on the road, a still, small voice woke in the lonely hours of the night, asking if perhaps she had not been too harsh. How could her girlish vanity help being flattered by the thought of all that he had been willing to give up in order to spend commonplace evenings at her side! How was it possible to read those wild letters, filled with a breaking, boyish heart, and not feel compassion pleading on his side!

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To make matters worse for Frank, Mrs. Hennaberry made her appearance on the scene, and her return brought matters to a head. A glance at her son's haggard face served to confirm her worst fears — there was a woman in the case! With Mrs. Hennaberry, as with many highly respectable people, it was always *cherchez la femme*, but she could learn nothing by all her searches this time.

The strained relations between mother and son flared up into open quarrels. The last straw was added when, in a stormy interview, he quoted Sister Flora against her, and owned that he was on visiting acquaintance in that forbidden abode. Mrs. Hennaberry had four new maids that week.

Frank went back to a dreary stretch of college, but at Thanksgiving the silver lining to the cloud appeared. It came in the shape of a note from Beulah: she would be playing in Philadelphia Christmas week, and Frank might come and see her if he would. Before that time many letters crossed in the mails; the meeting necessitated a wonderful amount of arranging; and gradually a note of intimacy crept into the letters that had never been there before.

When Frank announced that he would not spend the Christmas holidays at home the climax was reached. Mrs. Hennaberry's first move was to issue a mandate that Frank return forthwith. When that failed — having first quelled Mr. Hennaberry's feeble remonstrance — she hurled against him the pronunciamiento of disinheritance. A reply as proud, as vindictive as her letter astounded and nonplused her. That she would not ultimately be able to conquer her son, and bring him to his senses, had never occurred to her.

Silence ensued; but what Frank never knew was that on the twentieth of December, his mother took the train to Philadelphia, and with a heart aching for reconciliation, drove past the windows of the college dormitories. But she found herself incapable of striking her colors.

She returned to the station without leaving the carriage and took the train for New York.

So when Frank came to Beulah's hotel in Philadelphia, it was in the rôle that she had known him first made earnest, that of the young man with his way to make in the world. Of course the only logical thing for two young people who have nothing in the world to do, is to get

married; and sympathy is the quickest way to a woman's heart. Four months of loneliness, the thought that only a word stood between her and a world of affectionate devotion, had weakened her defenses; and Frank this time found no serious resistance to his wishes.

He lost no time in making sure of his conquest. Dr. Marshall was hastily summoned from college, a Miss Nugent who played in the company was pressed into service for bridesmaid; and the quartet proceeded to Wilmington where the knot was tied, and Frank and Beulah pronounced man and wife.

Then came another hasty trip back to Philadelphia, for the girls still had an evening's work at the theater ahead of them. When they arrived at Broad Street Station, Frank went to send a wire to Beulah's people in the West announcing the event, Miss Nugent disappeared in a neighboring telephone booth, and Stewart Marshall was left alone with Beulah. They had not met before, but Frank had talked so much to each of the other that they had instantly accepted each other as old friends. In the mad rush of the past few hours everything had appeared dim and unreal to Beulah; but now it seemed

to her that for the moment a little oasis of peace was created for her in the midst of the roar of traffic. For the first time she really took a good look at the young man beside her. Honesty, modesty, and strength were clear cut on the erect body and pleasant face. Unconsciously she compared those kind, sure eyes smiling at her with Frank's nervous, restless charm. A wave of doubt swept over her.

"Do you think it's all been a mistake?" The words came involuntarily from her lips.

"Nonsense! It's all right—it's all right," his voice rang back cheerfully through the clamor of ingoing and outgoing trains; and with the sound, peace and security returned to Beulah too.

"Wasn't that foolish of me?" she protested. "I suppose every girl feels like that."

Then Frank was back; good-byes were exchanged and the young couple were off for a hasty supper tête-à-tête before the play.

Stewart Marshall stood on the platform and watched the retreating figures. "Lucky fellow!" he ejaculated under his breath. "She's a winner! No such luck for me!"

Something had happened on the station platform; but Dr. Marshall never told what it was.

CHAPTER IV

THE SOBER PART OF THE STORY

BEULAH resigned her position in the company, and when Frank returned to college for the mid-year session, she went with him. He gave up his elaborate suite and they took modest lodgings. It is not easy for a young man who has lived with his hand in his pocket, the center of an admiring crowd of hangers-on, to face the shifts of bare economy; but Frank went through the ordeal without a whimper. In fact the first year of his marriage was the happiest time of his whole life; he adored Beulah, and she set to work to make him the best sort of wife.

The first thing was to break the news to the family, or more properly speaking to Mrs. Henna-berry, who would eventually announce what the family attitude in the matter was. Frank wanted to depute Dr. Marshall advance scout into the camp of the enemy, but Stewart, usually so eager to lend the helping hand, discreetly declined the post. He had seen too many carried from that battle field, and life still looked good to him.

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So finally it was upon Mrs. Egener's shoulders that the burden fell, and full of sympathy for the lovers, she hurried to Washington Square to make their peace. Perhaps there may have been a pulse of triumph in her breast in the thought that Henrietta's own son had committed the very act for which she had been banished from the family; but when she faced her sister, it subsided into a whole-hearted desire to make her understand that a great love can make life worth while even though one no longer has a visiting list.

The young couple could hardly have chosen a worse emissary. To have Frank walk off and marry himself without a by-your-leave, that was bad enough; but to have the first confidante of the dreadful act not herself, but of all people, Flora Egener! no, *that* Mrs. Hennaberry felt that she could never forgive! All the battles that she had ever waged paled in comparison with the talking-to that she gave Flora Egener on that unhappy morning. In the first place, Beulah was a chorus girl, no amount of explanation could alter her on that point. Beulah was on the stage, ergo a chorus girl; if she was a chorus girl she must be immoral; if immoral

an adventuress who had entrapped her son; and that in her eyes was grounds for an annulment of the entire proceedings.

When she had finished with her arraignment of Beulah, she turned her batteries on Flora; the past was reviewed and the present reviled before she ordered her from the house and sat down to compose a fitting letter to Frank. This mailed, she folded her hands and waited for him to make his peace. She waited in vain.

When Jacob proposed reconciliation, she stormed him down, and the more she stormed, the more she longed for the very thing that she rejected.

With temper equal to her own, Frank read her letter; and it was then that Beulah first learned that all along she had been the cause of Frank's estrangement from his parents. Frank sent a curt note to his father, asking that his clothes be sent, and not only they but everything that he had ever possessed was scrupulously forwarded to him.

Then he and Beulah held a family council to discuss ways and means. Frank was for going to work at once, but Beulah would listen to nothing but that he should finish his course at college,

and set her wits to work to find the way to accomplish it. She became a wonderful contriver. It was surprising what an attractive table was always ready for the chance guest, when the weekly expenditure was next to nothing. Some of Frank's odd jewelry, that was really of no use to him, kept them going the rest of the term; Frank got tutoring work that saw them through the summer; and a collection of rare etchings paid for the time in November when Dulcie came to them.

A pale wisp of a child with a fluff of yellow hair like a halo round her head. The first great passion of Beulah's life awoke when they put her baby into her arms; she wrapped her heart about little Dulcie with a joy that had something almost savage in it. Frank pretended to be jealous; he said that Dulcie had cut him out entirely.

The last year at college was finished somehow, and they went back to New York, Frank to spend his days at a clerk's desk in a down-town office, Beulah hers in a modest flat not far from Morningside Park, where she could take Dulcie for sun and air.

It was that winter that Frank began to show signs of lowering vitality. Thin boots and wet

weather resulted in a cold that hung on month after month and would not be shaken off. With the spring he seemed to have conquered the trouble; but during the summer, a check of perspiration brought on a sudden attack that almost ended in pneumonia. His strength never really rallied; for over two years he put up an ever-weakening struggle against his enemy.

Those were Beulah's dark days; to pinch and save when luxuries were almost a necessity, to watch Frank grow weaker and paler month by month. There were times when she was ready to go to his parents and beg for means to buy the rest that meant everything for their son, but the mention of such a thing always roused such a fury of opposition in Frank that she always gave it up.

His disposition underwent a change; he became captious and irritable; he gave way to unreasonable fits of temper, and these were always followed by days of exhaustion and depression. The position had to be given up, even the walks into the park became more and more infrequent, and his sole occupation was to lie on the couch in their tiny living room and tell fairy stories to Dulcie.

This suited Dulcie exactly, for the frail baby was growing into a delicate child, who lived in a land of dreams. Her little imagination ran riot with the wonderful princesses and fairy palaces about which her father told her. She made stories of everything and everybody around her, and the people of her dreams were more real to her than flesh and blood people of everyday.

So things ran on for over two years. But there came a time when Frank's condition became alarming. A severe winter used up the last remnants of failing strength, and when the attending doctor — Stewart Marshall was completing his studies in Germany that year — ordered a milder climate, and found Frank as resolute as ever against an appeal to his parents, he took matters into his own hands. Mr. and Mrs. Hennaberry were spending some months in Florida, but a concise letter to Mr. Hennaberry made plain the state of the case. The answer was a frantic telegram; a special car was to be chartered, and at all costs the physician was to drop his practice and bring Frank South to them at once. A cable brought Stewart Marshall speeding to this country on the first steamer.

Now came the hardest wrench for Beulah, for in all the elaborate preparation no mention had been made of provision for her. This was not unintentional, for Mrs. Hennaberry looked upon all this trouble as a piece of deliberate contrivance on Beulah's part against her peace of mind. She fully intended to take Beulah in when she arrived in a properly contrite condition, but she intended to give her a bad quarter of an hour first. As Beulah could not divine that she was expected, she made the preparations for her sacrifice in silence. There was never a doubt in her mind as to whether Frank should leave her or not, his health was all that must be considered ; for Dulcie and herself she could manage.

In fact the providing for all three of them had of late fallen on her shoulders. Practically everything of value that Frank owned had gone bit by bit to pay for doctoring and to square their modest bills. But Beulah could wield a deft needle, as the dainty garments in which she kept her fairy princess clothed could testify ; she managed to pick up work that she could do at home, and gradually assumed the responsibilities of the little family.

Frank's departure was delayed for several

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days ; the excitement of the preparations caused another sinking spell, and when he rallied enough to be carried aboard the train, Beulah left behind on the station platform, suddenly felt a heart-breaking premonition that she had said "good-bye."

At first the trip seemed to revive him ; he became more like himself than he had been for months ; but shortly before the journey's end he had another seizure and relapsed into semi-consciousness. He was still living when they bore him from the train to the hospital ; shortly afterwards he slipped painlessly away. , He had not recognized either his father or his mother.

Dr. Marshall arrived at St. Augustine five days later, only to find that his trip had been useless : the Hennaberrys had taken their departure for home. He retraced his steps to New York, too late to attend the last services over his old chum, but with one thought uppermost in his mind : to do everything in his power for those that Frank had left behind.

He could find no trace of either wife or child. From the little haven on Manhattan Avenue they had disappeared into the maelstrom of the

great city, leaving no ripple behind to mark their way.

From Dr. Appleton he learned what had happened. On reaching the city, word had been sent by the Hennaberrys to tell Beulah of her loss, to request that she should be present at the services, and to intimate that in future they would assume control of their grandchild. They had received no reply, Beulah had not appeared at the house, and when Mrs. Hennaberry had arrived in person on Manhattan Avenue to claim her granddaughter, she found only an empty flat and a foreign janitor, from whom she could learn nothing save the fact that Mrs. Randolph was "gone away, ja!"

For many days Dr. Marshall made inquiries that proved to be fruitless; followed numberless clues, only to find that they led nowhere; and finally despairing, he called at the Hennaberry residence to relieve his mind. He would tell Frank's parents in no uncertain terms what he thought of the whole proceeding. He could cite much that he knew himself, and more that he had learned from Dr. Appleton. His case for Beulah was so unanswerable that there seemed little room for doubt that he would force Frank's

parents to plead "Guilty" to grave injustice. But like many an inexperienced lawyer, he reckoned without the quotient of error. His brief remained unrepresented; for he had not been talking five minutes when Mrs. Hennaberry rose on him.

Grief and remorse had wrought havoc within her for days, but she could not bring herself to admit that she had been in the wrong. She needed an outlet for the torrent that was seething inside her, and she poured it out on the unfortunate doctor. She talked him out of the room, and down the stairs, right to the very front door. Stewart Marshall was a man to whom fear might be said to be unknown; but before that onslaught he turned tail and fled like a renegade.

From that time Dr. Marshall's name was not mentioned in the Hennaberry household. He too was among the eliminated.

CHAPTER V

THE RISE AND FALL OF FRAU BUNDEFELDER

So that is why Beulah lived hidden away in Jackson Street by the East River, and this is how she came to be there.

Frau Bundefelder was a lady of German birth, whose life like that of some hardy cereal might be divided into three periods, growth, a glorious time of harvest, and then that lengthy period when, stripped of its store, the stalk stands enjoying a peaceful but reduced existence in the mellow autumn sunshine.

She had arrived from the fatherland early in youth, strong in body and in faith of what the promised land should hold for her. With tireless energy she had faced the problem of new conditions; she took a position with a good family; she rose early and worked late; she enjoyed few pleasures. No one suspected that in her modest breast fermented a great ambition. Soon her aspirations received a fresh spur; on a holiday excursion to Coney Island she met young Hein-

rich Bundefelder, also a newcomer in America, and clerk in a down-town grocery store. Among her treasured possessions remained a memento of that evening, a palm leaf fan, which bore for decoration a smart pink ribbon bow, and amid a floral convulsion, the legend "Souvenir of Coney Island."

Until he had met his Berta, young Heinrich had thought life as he found it to be good; but under the warmth of her enthusiasm, ambition kindled in his soul. Together they worked and planned. After a time he blossomed out into a delicatessen store with the name of Heinrich Bundefelder displayed over the door, and it was wise Berta who stocked the little shop, and balanced the books at the end of each busy week.

And so it was that as middle age approached, they were able to marry, and as Frau Bundefelder put it, "Dank nobody for nodings." In other words the great dream had come true; the little shop had become several shops, and now blazed forth as a first-class provision store that occupied half a block in Brooklyn, while the Bundefelders launched themselves into society with a real stone house and an automobile.

Now Frau Bundefelder began to feel herself;

she was a woman of real constructive ability, and she not only became one of the circle which she achieved, she was a power in it. Not a meeting of the Schuetzenfest took place within a radius of five hundred miles, but she was to be seen there; no German-American charity ball occurred in New York City that her name was not high on the list of lady patronesses. They kept open house; nowhere else were such cakes and pies to be had, for Frau Berta, rolling up her sleeves from her plump, white arms, would descend upon the kitchens on baking-day and turn the red-cheeked mädchens, who now assisted her, from the place. "Ja! dey are goot girls," she would laugh. "Dey bake goot stuff—but not for Heinrich!"

Nor were old friends of humbler days ignored. "Com in, com in," she would cry. "Der house is better, aindt it! but ve are yoost der same."

Frau Bundefelder's fortunes were at their full when Beulah first arrived in New York. Now in Beulah's home town lived a cousin of Heinrich Bundefelder's, a thrifty seamstress who went out by the day, and she it was who was called in to concoct the new dresses in which Beulah was to try her fortunes in the big city. Miss

Bundefelder had a reputation for the *dernier cri* which she upheld by half-yearly visits to New York. "Now when you get to N'Yawk," she told Beulah, at the same time dexterously manipulating a mouthful of pins, "you go right to my cousin Heinrich's. He's got a good house, and a good wife, and they'll treat you nice."

So the young girl started for the East with a professional card of Miss Bundefelder's reposing in her bag, on which she had written a few words of introduction. But the days that followed Beulah's arrival were busy ones, and the card lay unused in Beulah's card case; when one day West Forty-fifth Street was enlivened by a huge, red touring car which chugged up to the door of Beulah's boarding house, and presently the astonished Beulah was clasped in a pair of motherly arms, while Frau Bundefelder, with tears running down her cheeks cried, "Vy! girl, vy didn't you let me know you vas here lonesome in der city?" She felt that she had just arrived in time to rescue Beulah from some great calamity. She would have taken Beulah home to live with them if she would have consented, and as it was, the red automobile became something of a nuisance, so often did it stop at the door. She would

take no denials. "Com oudt," she would laugh. "It's costin der money, unt it's gotter be used. Bring two, tree your friends, dat der may be no heart-bleedings in der house."

Foremost among Beulah's few wedding presents was a magnificent gilt clock from the Bundefelders which even put to shame a couple of fine pictures that Dr. Marshall had sent them. In fact the clock would have contrived to make any place short of a curio shop look poverty-stricken; but Beulah treasured it for the kindness that came with it, and clung to it when many things had gone to meet physician's bills.

With Beulah's marriage the intimacy fell off. Frau Bundefelder's hearty familiarities jarred on sensitive Frank, and he took no pains to hide the fact.

"Kind of pniffen, eh?" remarked Frau Bundefelder after one such rebuff; and for the future she took care to come only at times when Frank was apt to be from home.

He had no share in Beulah's enjoyment of real people and work-a-day romance. To rub elbows with life only made him sick at soul. She could have risen to his world; trying to sink to hers robbed him of the only atmosphere

in which he could breathe freely, and really killed him.

It was realization of this that made the last year of Frank's life an agony to Beulah, continually trying, as she did, to find an answer to the unsolvable problem, and afterwards raised in her a passionate devotion to his memory that she had never given to the man.

On the evening before he set out on the fatal journey to the South, they were together in the living room, Beulah by the lamp with needle-work in hand, Frank listless on the couch.

"Beulah," he began in the light tone he often used to cover earnestness, "if anything happens to me, will you promise me that there will never be anyone else?"

She tried to answer "Yes," but the words stuck in her throat and would not come; she made an excuse and hurried from the room. But afterward she bitterly repented. "Oh! I ought to have said it! I ought to have said it!" she reproached herself.

In the dark days that followed the news of Frank, Beulah's comfort was Frau Bundefelder, but times had altered with the good frau. With an astounding rapidity she had gone up in the

world, and even more suddenly she had descended from the heights. Supremely successful as the couple had been when, so to speak, they could balance the books on their ten fingers, they were lost in the realms of the arithmetic of higher finance. Poor investment and a spectacular flyer in stocks had resulted in a crash that had swept away everything. Heinrich's wife had given him the courage to succeed, but she could not supply enough to make him fail gracefully. The blow killed him. As for herself, she gave up everything without a murmur; her hair showed gray for the first time, but her face was still serene, her eyes as kindly. Friends pressed forward with offers of assistance, but she returned to the vicinity from which she had started thirty-five years before. She could give gracefully, she could not receive. "I haf had everydings," she said with dignity, "unt I haf enough."

Up four flights in a rickety tenement on Jackson Street she established herself, but as in her days of affluence, she dominated the circle in which she found herself. She was looked up to with wholesome awe by the neighbors of various nationalities who inhabited the different flats, and she ran the place by a series of elaborate

intrigue, worthy of a Bavarian court. War was declared in whispers in her tiny rooms, and presently resounded throughout the entire building; and there truce was declared and peace ratified. All questions of etiquette were deferred to her, and newspapers narrating the doings of the Four Hundred were brought to her as a fitting attention.

-“Ja! ja!” she would sigh, smiling complacently at the imposing cuts. “I had it all vonce. I aindt got it, but I did got it.”

She was with Beulah when the bad news about Frank came; she it was who helped to keep the truth from Dulcie when Beulah’s stunned brain almost failed in keeping up the fairy tale.

Coming in a few days later she found Beulah staring dully at a letter in her hand. “But what am I to do about it?” she asked miserably.

Frau Bundefelder hastily scanned the letter. “Vat! dot dey shall take der child from der mother! No! no!” she exclaimed, slapping the paper emphatically on the table.

“But what am I to do?” repeated Beulah.

“Vat vill ve do? Ve vill go togedder to dot nouse. Ve vill pay respects to der dead husband, ja! Unt after dot, you don’t need to do noddings. I’m yoost goin to talk high deutsch to dot vomans.”

"No! no! they mustn't see me," cried Beulah wildly. "They'll get Dulcie away from me if I let them see her." She was in a frenzy of uneasiness until she could vacate their apartment. She cried out that she had done her duty by Frank when he was alive, and that others could do better for him now. The mother in her drove out all other thoughts. It was not until afterwards that it came as an added reproach to her over-tender conscience that she had paid no public tribute to her dead. It joined the throng of doubts, that grew and grew until she began to feel that they were hedging her from the world of living people.

Well was it for Frau Bundefelder that she never carried out her project of visiting the Hennaberry residence. She would have lasted with Mrs. Hennaberry just long enough to allow that indomitable woman to get her breath. Let us draw a curtain over what might have happened afterwards.

Her second suggestion proved a happy one. She proposed that Beulah and Dulcie return with her to Jackson Street, and although Beulah would not agree to rob her kind-hearted old friend of space in her own tiny flat, when it ap-

peared that there was an apartment just across the hall recently vacated, she immediately assented that the ideal place of refuge had been found. It combined every qualification that her needs required; extreme cheapness, that was a necessary item; as a hiding place no better haystack could have been devised for her industrious needle; and then she could go out to work, happy in the knowledge that there was someone to look after Dulcie at home.

With guilty haste the two women set to work. At Frau Bundefelder's own suggestion the famous gilt clock was at last disposed of — to see Frau Bundefelder recounting each of its many accomplishments to the second-hand furniture man was an education — and the proceeds paid for the moving and many odds and ends that were needed to settle them in their new quarters. A few hours accomplished it all; the old rooms stood bare and deserted.

That night Beulah stood by the window of her new home and looked out into the darkness. Below her coiled the dusky river, and suspended above her the diminishing line of lights that ended in the dim glow of the far-off city. It made her think of the rainbow with the pot of gold at the

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end ; but the golden glow seemed very far away, the bridge over the dark river was long and weary ; she sighed and turned away. For the first time she realized that she was the man of the family.

CHAPTER VI

THE MANEUVERS OF INGEBORG

AND now for the truth about Mrs. Hennaberry. From everything that we have thus far seen of her, the only possible conclusion that could be drawn is that she was the most disagreeable woman ever born. The truth is simply this: Mrs. Hennaberry was a colossal bluff, nothing more or less. The tragedy of her life was that her intentions and her personality did not square; she wanted to do the right thing by everyone, but every time she opened her mouth, just as surely did she say the wrong thing — said it so convincingly that people took her seriously, and then she had to live up to it. Most of the trouble in life comes from taking people seriously, and mistaking for determined purpose what is nine times out of ten nothing but an explosion of bad temper. As the majestic lioness traverses the desert looking for a royal mate, so did Mrs. Hennaberry roam the wastes of society searching unconsciously for someone who would stand up to her, administer a sound mental spanking, and

make her behave. But as yet she had never met anybody in her class as a domestic martinet; she belonged to a species that was all her own.

It is true that Ingeborg had achieved a sort of mild triumph over Mrs. Hennaberry, and this is how Ingeborg came into the story.

After her quarrel with Frank, Mrs. Hennaberry eliminated so many maids that the house on Washington Square came to be regarded as a veritable Black Hole among the fashionable intelligence offices. ("Why intelligence office?" commented Mrs. Hennaberry. "I never got anything there but a pack of idiots.") Many a poor servant girl entered those doors quaking with the thought that perhaps she might never issue thence; but justice demands the statement that these fears generally proved to be ungrounded, and that she came out again — some quicker than others.

Finally it came to a place where neither love nor money would induce fresh incumbents to apply for the post; and there was one dreadful time when Mrs. Hennaberry was practically attended by Abraham alone for two whole weeks. It was at this time that an advertisement for a French maid appeared in the daily newspaper.

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The next morning a person with a strong Swedish accent and a determined expression presented herself at the servants' entrance of the house on Washington Square. It was Ingeborg. Abraham opened the door for her, and in the joy that her arrival gave him, he could have embraced her on the spot. He could scarcely conceal his impatience until he had got her inside and shut the door upon her. Mrs. Hennaberry was not up yet, but Abraham made the new applicant remove her coat, and fetched her a cup of coffee and some of the tid-bits prepared for Mrs. Hennaberry's own morning consumption.

Unhappy man! He little knew the trouble that he was laying in store for himself! Ingeborg had never encountered such cordiality in her life. Looking into Abraham's kindly face and honest blue eyes, she came to a decision that she had found what she had traveled many thousand miles of weary ocean in search of, and if necessary, like a female Jacob, she stood ready to do seven years' service to win her ideal.

Seated at her breakfast table, Mrs. Hennaberry regarded Ingeborg through her glasses.

"Are you the French maid?" she asked.

"Ja!" replied Ingeborg blandly. "I'm the French maid."

"What part of France do you come from?" asked Mrs. Hennaberry.

"Stockholm," answered Ingeborg suavely.

Mrs. Hennaberry gave a snort. "You won't do," she thundered.

Ingeborg drew off one glove. "How many days a month do I get out?" she inquired.

"You are an incompetent!" boomed Mrs. Hennaberry. "Don't you hear me?"

"Ja!" replied Ingeborg. "How much money shall I get a month?"

Ingeborg remained, and in the end she proved a treasure to Mrs. Hennaberry. She never answered back, she never lost her temper; half-a-hundred times a week she was discharged, but she did not go; forty times a day Mrs. Hennaberry called her a fool, to which Ingeborg placidly returned, "Yes, madame."

But as the eye of the serpent fastens upon the little bird, so did the determined gaze of deeply smitten Ingeborg attract even while it repelled the unhappy Abraham. The house over which he had held sway had become a place of insecurity and harassment to him now; his privacy was

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his no longer, his hitherto unquestioned authority below-stairs was circumvented. No longer did pretty housemaids trip the halls; they were supplanted by a brigade of the lean and hatchet-faced, for Ingeborg saw to it that no other variety was comfortable in the house. The Swedish damsel was a maneuverer, one of those against whom Solomon uttered a "Beware!" — a whisperer in the courts.

Did Abraham chance to meet one of the other maids in the pantry and stop to pass a pleasant word, he was pretty certain to suddenly find Ingeborg's voice a participant in the conversation.

"I beg your pardon, I did not know that I intrude," she would say, at the same time quietly planting herself between Abraham and the possible rival to her hopes. And what was there for the wretched butler to do but murmur dejectedly, "Now, Ingeborg, what would you be intruding for?"

But at the time at which the story opens, Ingeborg had at last begun to question if her desires would ever be fulfilled. Suspicious actions on the part of Abraham had been disturbing her peace of mind for some time back, and one morning meeting him in conference with a

trig young parlor-maid, who had somehow managed to slip past her guard into the house, the flood-gates of her long pent-up emotion opened wide.

"Oh yes! oh yes!" she ejaculated bitterly. "When mens find younger faces, old friends soon grow unwelcome."

"Are you alluding to me, Miss Ingeborg?" flared up the indignant Anna; and trouble was only averted by Abraham's declaration that Mrs. Hennaberry's bell had just rung.

But later Ingeborg again returned to the attack. "It is easy to see where your feelings are," she wailed, taking refuge in her handkerchief. "They say here in the house that you are in love with her."

Abraham sighed. "You've been asking me that question about every pretty girl we've had in the house these three years. I'm getting tired of it."

A smile of April sunshine stole through Ingeborg's tears. "Well, is it not natural, Abraham?" she ventured. "One expects a fine-looking man like you to marry." Abraham did not respond, and she added coyly, "It's a duty that he owes to his country, doesn't he?"

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Abraham had a premonition of what was coming. "Does he, Ingeborg?" he stammered.

"Of course he does," replied Ingeborg, edging up to him. "Why don't you get married?"

Abraham backed away, but she was close upon him; a table blocked his escape behind, and Ingeborg's head was perilously near his bosom. "Abraham!" she murmured, but rapidly performing a feat of jiu-jitsu, he eluded her and put the table between them.

As the tiger balked of its prey turns on the hunter, so did Ingeborg turn on the fugitive Abraham. "Very well! very well!" she cried, emphasizing her words with a slap on the table, "but let me tell you, mens can compromise themselves as well as womens. Arms may have been around waists — and *with witnesses!*" Memories of a certain harmless act of gallantry during a trip to Coney Island with Ingeborg flashed through Abraham's reeling brain. "Kisses to the number of seven may have been given — and *with witnesses!*" continued Ingeborg.

"They was the kisses of innocence, Ingeborg," cried Abraham desperately.

"The law may be invoked when necessary,"

finished Ingeborg triumphantly, "and damages collected to large amounts."

But Abraham had fled.

He had cause to fear discovery, but not in the fashion that Ingeborg had in mind. During the summer, Beulah was wont on Sunday to go out to Woodlawn — the Sleeping City, Dulcie called it — where the Hennaberry family vault was located, to sit and think. And there one afternoon a few months before, Abraham had come upon the little trio, Beulah and Dulcie stretched upon the grass, Frau Bundefelder, her Sunday best gathered carefully around her, perched upon a stone which she had upholstered with Sunday newspapers.

Beulah had thought her visits there quite safe during the months when the family were sure to be out of town, and it was with consternation that she caught sight of Abraham. He recognized her at once, for he had been Frank's messenger on several occasions during the courting days. It ended in a long talk between them, and when they left the cemetery, Dulcie rode on Abraham's faithful back.

Fearful at first, Beulah finally came to let him join in their little excursions in search of sun and

fresh air for Dulcie. It was good to have someone along to give the frail, little body a lift when it became tired, as it did so often nowadays; good to have someone with whom she could talk understandingly of Frank. So Abraham won her trust at last, and when cold weather settled down, and the family were back in town for the winter, he continued to steal away to Jackson Street whenever he had a free hour, for a chat with Beulah and a romp with Dulcie. It was tacitly understood between them that Mrs. Hennaberry's name was not to be mentioned, and Ingeborg he preferred to obliterate from his memory when it was possible.

But though he forgot Ingeborg, it by no means meant that Ingeborg had forgotten him, and at last these unexplained absences of Abraham aroused her curiosity to such an extent that she determined at all costs to gratify it.

It was not in the devious nature of Ingeborg to make a bold attack. Her first step was to enlist the aid of Bella, the chambermaid. Together they prepared themselves for rapid action; the next time that Abraham issued from the house, they were into hats and coats, and hot-foot on the trail. He had almost two blocks'

start, but Ingeborg, economical in all ordinary affairs, could be prodigal when her emotions were called into play. She hailed a passing taxicab and followed the retreating form of the unsuspecting butler.

The following morning Ingeborg presented herself before her mistress with eyes scarlet from a watchful and watery night.

"What is the matter?" asked Mrs. Hennaberry, putting on her glasses.

"Nothing, madame," replied Ingeborg, suppressing a sniff.

"Now let us understand one another," began Mrs. Hennaberry, folding her arms judicially. "I will not have you walking yourself out without permission, the way you did yesterday afternoon. What were you doing?"

"I would rather not say, madame," replied her handmaid, reaching for her handkerchief.

"Nonsense!" returned Mrs. Hennaberry. "Don't I always find out everything? Tell me, or I shall probably think it was worse than it really was. Besides it wasn't faithful to your duty."

The waterworks began. "I am always faithful to my duty," sobbed Ingeborg, "but I have my feelings as well as other people."

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Mrs. Hennaberry raised a scornful eyebrow. "I see, it's Abraham again. Why don't you marry the man and be done with it?"

"This time I have caught him, madame," cried Ingeborg.

"You're always catching him," replied Mrs. Hennaberry laconically, and indeed she had enacted this scene with her maid on several previous occasions.

But Ingeborg would not be quieted. "Ah! but this time, madame!" she insisted. "Does a man make the mystery when he doesn't fear the discovery? Does he act the ashame? Yesterday I follow him."

"Where?"

"Far down on the East Side; a neighborhood — ah! terrible! so poor! so ugly! I make a question to the neighbors; he has been there before. She is young, madame; she is pretty, madame; and, oh! madame, madame, she have a little girl!" And Ingeborg gave way to a veritable flood of tears.

"Ingeborg, you're a fool!" shouted Mrs. Hennaberry.

"Yes, madame," sobbed Ingeborg miserably.

"Abraham is a perfectly respectable man,"

continued Mrs. Hennaberry. "And by the way, what did you say her name was?"

"I did not say it," wailed Ingeborg. "But I know it, and I will have a revenge — I will make a divorce on him!"

"You can't get a divorce until you've been married," snapped Mrs. Hennaberry.

"Then I will get that other thing — breeches of promise," replied Ingeborg with determination. "I have my feelings as well as other people, and I will make him pay me good money for the wrong that he has done me."

Mrs. Hennaberry told her to be quiet, and promptly forgot all about the matter, but visions of that taxicab bill were still vivid in the memory of the Scandinavian French maid.

CHAPTER VII

DR. MARSHALL PAYS A CALL

MEANTIME Mr. Hennaberry has been kept a long time waiting for his breakfast. When Mrs. Hennaberry recovered from Mrs. Egener's onslaught, the first thing she did was to rush to the door and call after the departing figure, "Very well then — go!" She paused a moment in expectation that Flora would return, without giving consideration to the fact that her words would not generally be construed as a pressing invitation to remain. As Mrs. Egener continued unswervingly on her way to the front door, she followed this up with, "Not a penny! not a single penny shall you get!" and banged the door of her boudoir shut.

But her sister was not out of the house before she was pulling madly at the servants' bell. "Abraham," she cried as that excited individual rushed into the room, "go get Bella quick, tell her to put on her hat and coat, follow that lady, and find out where she lives."

"No, Abraham is an accessory before the fact, and can remain," he said, and while the bewildered Mr. Hennaberry was wondering what he ought to say, he went on, "You will have guessed already that it is about Frank's wife and child, your grandchild, that I have called to-day."

"Yes, yes, what of them? They have quite drifted out of my life since Frank—" The old man's voice died away as he encountered the doctor's reproachful, kindly eyes.

"Yes, I know," said Dr. Marshall quietly. "They were allowed to *drift* out very easily."

Mr. Hennaberry coughed apologetically. "Mrs. Hennaberry did not seem to be able to bring herself to the point of forgiving Beulah, and she, poor girl, loved her child too well to give it up."

"That is why I come to you instead of to Mrs. Hennaberry. Things aren't going very well just now with Mrs. Randolph."

"Randolph!" interrupted Mr. Hennaberry. "We always understood the young woman's name to be Dennison."

"That was merely a stage name," replied the doctor. "After Frank's death, she did not care

to use the name his family begrudged her, and resumed her maiden name, Beulah Randolph." A smile crept over the young man's lips. "It's a pretty name, isn't it?" he asked irrelevantly.

Mr. Hennaberry gave him a quick glance. "You seem to know this Mrs. Randolph very well," he said.

Marshall's face became grave again. "I think it only fair to tell you that if Mrs. Randolph would accept from me, there would be no need of this visit here to-day." He paused for a moment and then added almost reverently, "For a long time I have wanted her to become my wife."

To Mr. Hennaberry any solution that did not involve the possible displeasure of Mrs. Hennaberry seemed a good one. "She refuses!" he exclaimed. "So eligible a connection!"

"She won't even give me the chance to be refused," answered the doctor ruefully. "*She* doesn't forget your son."

The old man's face softened. "I think that rather fine of her." Then he hastened to add apologetically to the doctor, "At least it shows that she values her connection with our family."

There was a shade of irony in the doctor's voice. "I fail to see the value of that connection to Mrs. Randolph; all it has meant to her is the loss of a profession which at least gave her a comfortable living, the pleasure of supporting your son through a long and exhausting illness, and since then of doing the same thing for his child, and to do it by that hardest of all trades, a seamstress."

"But her former profession was still open to her," argued Mr. Hennaberry.

"The child was a complication," replied the doctor. "Mrs. Randolph refused to be separated from her, and she couldn't carry a delicate child with her on the road, nor had she the capital to sit idle in New York and wait for a desirable engagement. The last four years have not been easy ones for your daughter-in-law, and now there are hard days ahead for both her and the child."

"For the child!" exclaimed Mr. Hennaberry puzzled. But Abraham, who had been standing eagerly at his master's side, could contain himself no longer. "Oh! sir, she's the most beautiful little thing you ever saw," he said. "Why she ain't like a mortal child at all."

"Abraham! you have seen her?" cried Mr. Hennaberry, who was inclined to believe that the whole world had suddenly gone topsy-turvy.

Abraham touched his forehead apologetically. "Yes, sir. I know it was taking a liberty, but Mr. Frank's little girl! She believes in fairies, sir, and kings and princesses; talks about em as if they was people what you'd see everyday — just like a policeman or a janitor." Abraham's voice had risen under the pressure of excitement, and a surprised look from Mr. Hennaberry recalled to him the fact that he was intruding. "Begging your pardon, sir," he concluded rather lamely, and subsided.

Mr. Hennaberry turned to the doctor. "You spoke of some trouble. Is it in regard to the child?" he asked.

"Poor little Dulcie! I am sorry to say — yes. She has never been a strong child; a weakness of the back."

"Oh! that's too bad! too bad!" sympathized Mr. Hennaberry.

"Now the trouble has taken a more definite turn," continued the doctor. "A few days ago Dr. Clark, a specialist in this kind of case, made

a thorough examination with me at the hospital. He pronounced an operation to be necessary in the very near future."

"An operation!" exclaimed Mr. Hennaberry. "How terrible! And the little mother?"

Dr. Marshall shook his head. "I haven't told her yet. I am going to see her to-day."

Mr. Hennaberry was quite overcome. His heart was touched, his impulse to hurry to Jackson Street and tell them that everything that money could do should be done to preserve that fragile little life, but he had not decided anything for so many years that now he felt incapable of doing anything without consulting Henrietta. He sank back in his chair murmuring uncertainly, "Dear! dear! how very unfortunate! Frank's child! Frank's child!"

Watchful Abraham hastened to bring the old man a sip of sherry from the dining-room, and even Dr. Marshall's resentment cooled as he saw the real suffering before him.

"Come! You mustn't take it like that," he said cheerily. "Think of the magnificent results we are going to obtain. We hope to make Dulcie well and strong again."

"Don't you think I had better speak to Mrs. Hennaberry?" began Mr. Hennaberry, after a feeble sip at the wine.

"Don't do that, sir," begged Abraham. "The missis has got a heart of gold, sir, but she's dreadful set against Miss Beulah. Don't tell her yet, sir."

Dr. Marshall reenforced his entreaty. "No, Mr. Hennaberry, this is a case which you should decide for yourself. Mrs. Hennaberry is impulsive, as I remember her." As a matter of fact, very well did Dr. Marshall remember her. "She might do something inadvertently that would cause you a lasting regret."

Mr. Hennaberry sighed. "That's very true, Henrietta is impulsive," he admitted. "Yet the thought of duplicity to my wife is very repugnant. Dear me! it is all very hard!"

The doctor's face hardened. "If it is hard for you, what about Mrs. Randolph?" he asked bluntly.

Mr. Hennaberry acknowledged the reproof. "Yes, I see," he said gently.

Then a smile that had something childlike in it lighted up his face. "It is strange that you should have come to-day," he continued. "This

is my wedding anniversary, Dr. Marshall, I always breakfast with Mrs. Hennaberry on that morning. While I was waiting for my wife in her sitting-room a little while ago, I amused myself by looking through an old closet where she keeps all sorts of odds and ends. And what do you think I found there?" He opened the drawer of his desk, and drew from it a battered old pasteboard box.

"It is a box of Frank's old baby toys," he said, and for a moment the two men sat looking down in silence at the discarded playthings.

"See," said Mr. Hennaberry, picking up one of the crimson regiment. "His mother had packed them all carefully away, and there they have been lying for over twenty years. What a coincidence! what a coincidence!"

Dr. Marshall shook his head. "That's what science calls these cases," he said gently. "Religion calls them something else."

Mr. Hennaberry replaced the lid on the box and offered it to the younger man. "I think that I would like the little girl to have her father's toys," he said.

But Dr. Marshall saw that the leaven was

working; he refused the box with a gesture. "I would rather that you should take them to her yourself," he said as he rose.

"I'm afraid I couldn't do that without speaking to Mrs. Hennaberry," hesitated Mr. Hennaberry, and then an avenue of escape presented itself to his mind: "Abraham knows the way, and he shall take it." He gave the box to the delighted butler, who disappeared with it into the hall, where he tied it up into a neat package.

"You won't go and see them yourself?" asked Marshall lingering at the door.

"I cannot promise; I must think it over," replied Mr. Hennaberry, who had already gone to lengths of daring that he had never dreamed possible.

"Well then, with that I shall have to be satisfied," sighed Dr. Marshall. "Though frankly I had hoped for more."

"More?" echoed Mr. Hennaberry.

"Mrs. Randolph's proper recognition by her husband's family."

"Ah! but in that case Mrs. Hennaberry would have to be consulted," began Mr. Hennaberry, but he got no farther.

"Yes! yes!" exclaimed Dr. Marshall hastily. "For the present we will leave Mrs. Hennaberry in the dark." And bidding the old gentleman a "Merry Christmas," he beat a quick retreat out of that perilous place.

"God bless you, sir!" whispered Abraham, as he helped the doctor into his top-coat.

And now the question arises as to how Dr. Marshall got back into the story. He was not the kind of man who takes defeat easily, and when his studies demanded his return to Germany and he had not been able to find out where the fugitives had secreted themselves, he did not give up his efforts to reach them; he tried letters addressed to every available point that he thought Beulah might still keep in touch with. Some of these letters, addressed to her people in the West, had eventually found her; but from a feeling that she had never summoned up courage to discuss with herself, she did not answer them. Dulcie now filled her heart and life; the thought that somehow she had failed in duty to Frank at the end took stronger and stronger possession of her, and she thought of herself as one set apart and dedicated to sorrow.

The truth is, that while her health and youth

seemed untouched by all that she had gone through, constant confinement and lack of all recreation were beginning to create a condition of mind that was not altogether normal. Ways and means caused her continual anxiety; then came the worst worry when Dulcie's health began to fail.

Symptoms appeared that could not be ignored, until one day Beulah and Dulcie made a fairy tale trip to the hospital on Hester Street for an examination.

And as things always come out right in fairy tales, the first person she ran into on entering the doors was Stewart Marshall, who had returned from his studies in Germany and was stationed as interne there. It seemed to Beulah that he had been raised up for her by Providence. His presence made everything so easy for Dulcie, and it would have seemed foolish and unkind to refuse this proffered help.

It ended in Dr. Marshall's taking charge of the case, and having been assigned the cure of Dulcie's bodily ills, he undertook Beulah's spiritual ailments on his own initiative. A better person could hardly have come into their lives at such a time. Besides it was not as if he had been a

stranger ; it seemed quite natural, now that he was a fixture at the hospital in near-by Hester Street, that he should drop in occasionally for the evening.

He was such a useful person about the house ; he entered into Dulcie's games of the imagination with gusto ; he had pockets that contained the most unexpected things ; and when it came to running errands, his speed and accuracy of memory were unequalled. Best of all, he brought a gale of wholesome, hearty laughter into the house ; and he knew just the right things to prescribe for Beulah : fresh air, nourishing food, and occasionally a concert or a theater — and he was the sort of doctor who knew how to get his prescriptions carried out, even if it meant taking part of the medicine himself.

But at last the thorn disclosed itself beside the rose, and pricked Beulah in her weak spot, the conscience. It was when the neighbors began to take notice, and she had to endure well-meant jocularities anent orange blossoms flowering again, and the like.

She would have put an end to the friendship there and then, but she found herself at an impasse. Dulcie did not seem to get better, and

where would she find another physician so devoted, so untiring?

| With a willingness that she felt to be guilty she put the idea of dismissal away from her. "When Dulcie gets well," she told herself, and her heart sank at the thought.

CHAPTER VIII

THE PLOT BEGINS TO THICKEN

As Mr. Hennaberry followed the doctor into the hall, he caught sight of the package which Abraham was tying up.

"What did you say that number was?" he asked when the doctor had gone.

"Miss Beulah's?" asked Abraham in surprise. "Number 69 Jackson Street."

His surprise was even greater when Mr. Hennaberry picked up the parcel, carried it back into the library, and wrote on it in his slanting, formal hand, "Mrs. Randolph, No. 69 Jackson Street."

"There," he said, handing the package to Abraham, "you may bring that to my office this afternoon. I'm not sure that I won't go with you myself — I'm not sure; but I shall think it over." And Jacob departed to the security of his down-town office, feeling that he had already had a very long day. He did not realize how much was still to come.

With a light heart, Abraham started upstairs

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to conceal the evidences of guilt in his own quarters, until such time as he could get away from his duties about the house. He had perilous regions to traverse however before that haven of safety could be reached. He had almost gained the landing before Mrs. Hennaberry's apartments, when the door of her boudoir opened and Mrs. Hennaberry appeared, demanding in angry tones why Ingeborg did not answer the bell.

Abraham executed a hasty retreat to the hall below, and almost ran into Ingeborg, who was ascending from the lower regions with such speed as nature had supplied her. Cornered, and at a loss what to do, Abraham thrust the box on the lower shelf of a table that stood in the hall, piled a couple of newspapers on top of it, and tried to look innocent, achieving that effect with the complete lack of success usual on such occasions.

"Coming, madame, coming," panted Ingeborg. Then as she reached Abraham, she said, "Order the electric immediately. Madame wants it at once; she is in a great hurry."

Abraham departed, rejoicing to have Mrs. Hennaberry betake herself out of the house so opportunely, but not without a sidelong glance

in the direction of the fatal package. His fears were not ungrounded.

Mrs. Hennaberry's voice sounded from above, "Ingeborg, have you found my embroidery?"

"Coming, madame, coming," replied Ingeborg mechanically, but her thoughts were no longer on her duties; she ceased her frantic climb, her movements became almost panther-like in a torpid sort of way. She followed Abraham as far as the pantry door until she was sure that he had really gone below, then she returned and drew the yellow paper parcel from its hiding place.

First she examined it top and bottom, then she shook it to see what kind of noise it would make, but only the faint rustling of excelsior answered her. At last she came to the address, and with a trembling forefinger, traced the inscription "Mrs. Randolph, No. 69 Jackson Street."

A sob of agony choked the throat of Ingeborg, her knees failed her, and she flopped limply on the stairs and gave vent to her feelings.

Meantime Mrs. Hennaberry was searching high and low for the embroidery which Flora Egner had left trampled under foot, and which she distinctly remembered having ordered somebody to pick up.

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"I simply cannot go out without that embroidery," she said. "You never can tell when it will come in useful. The other day when I was waiting in the Grand Central Station for a train, a woman was sitting there looking terribly dejected; I just let her work on it a bit, and it cheered her up wonderfully."

So she overturned the entire room until she found it, in the last place in the world you would have suspected — her work-box. She tucked it into her bag, found her coat and gloves, and finally as no Ingeborg appeared, started out to investigate in person why her orders were not obeyed. To her horror she found Ingeborg stretched out, an incoherent mass at the foot of the stairs.

"Why, Ingeborg, what is the matter?" exclaimed Mrs. Hennaberry, descending the stairs as quickly as the laws of equilibrium permitted.

"Matter, madame! I have found the proof!" cried Ingeborg, holding out the yellow parcel for Mrs. Hennaberry's inspection. "Oh! I am undone! I am undone!" she wailed.

"Why, that is only an ordinary bundle," said Mrs. Hennaberry, pointing to the innocent-looking package.

"You think so, but I say 'no,'" cried Ingeborg triumphantly. "It is addressed to *her*; that woman where I followed him yesterday. Mrs. Ra—" the words refused to come — "Mrs. Ra—a— Mrs. Randolph," finally came in an explosion from Ingeborg's lips, and the feshet started anew.

"Ingeborg, you're a fool!" said her mistress emphatically.

"Yes, madame," sobbed the unhappy maid behind her handkerchief.

"Give me the thing, and I'll soon see what it means," cominanded Mrs. Hennaberry, and she took the package and examined it judicially through her glasses. An expression of absolute amazement gradually spread over her features.

"Merciful heaven!" she exclaimed. "It is in Mr. Hennaberry's handwriting!" A dazed look came into her eyes; her face became scarlet with the amount of thinking she compressed into a few seconds. "You say you tracked Abraham to her house yesterday?" she puzzled. Suddenly she struck her palms together. "I see it all," she cried; "Mr. Hennaberry! I always knew that man was too good to be true, and now after all these years, I've found him out."

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"No! no! madame; you mistake. It is Abraham. For days I have watched; I have seen that he was hiding something," interrupted Ingeborg.

"Mr. Hennaberry has probably been using him as a go-between," decided Mrs. Hennaberry, not to be shaken in her opinion.

"Don't you see his own handwriting?" she demanded as Ingeborg tried to continue the argument.

Just at that moment a brilliant idea occurred to the maid. "Let us open the package, madame, and look within."

Mrs. Hennaberry regarded her with righteous indignation. "Certainly not; that would be very dishonorable," she frowned. "Besides they would probably find out that we had opened it," she added as an afterthought. And as Ingeborg seemed to have exhausted her supply of suggestions, she set her wits to find the proper solution.

"I have it!" she announced at length. "One of them must come to fetch the thing away." And indeed the voice of Abraham, speaking to one of the servants, was heard in the dining-room.

"We'll hide and watch," decided Mrs. Hennaberry. She made Ingeborg replace the box where

she had found it, and looked around for a suitable hiding-place.

The bay window with its heavy velvet hangings caught her eye. "You go back of this curtain, and I'll go back of that one," she ordered. Ingeborg still protested that it was Abraham, but Mrs. Hennaberry shoved her behind the curtain and bade her hold her tongue. For a moment they waited on either side of the window in breathless silence.

"Has anyone come yet?" asked Mrs. Hennaberry, who had not the patience to wait long for anything.

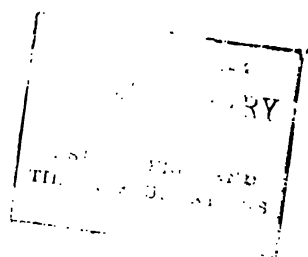
Ingeborg put her head out and took a rapid survey of the land. "No one, madame," she reported.

There was another pause which was broken by a weary sigh from Mrs. Hennaberry. "I wish that one of them would hurry up and do it," she remarked. "The suspense is simply awful."

A warning "Sh!" from Ingeborg silenced her, and indeed none too soon; cautious feet were coming down the hall, and soon Ingeborg's wary eye caught sight of Abraham, ready for the street in hat and overcoat, approaching the table. She made a sign to her mistress, and as Abraham



With a suppressed chuckle, he appropriated some fruit
from the table. *Page 105.*



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leaned down, Mrs. Hennaberry, peeking from her hiding-place, beheld her butler draw the guilty package from beneath the concealing newspapers.

With his charge safe under his arm, Abraham gave a hasty glance around; not a ripple of the heavy curtains betrayed what was going on behind them. Then with a suppressed chuckle, he appropriated some fruit from the table, and stole down the hall and out of the house.

"You see, madame," screamed Ingeborg, staggering from her hiding-place and collapsing in a chair.

Mrs. Hennaberry issued from her side of the window, but no sign of weakness was visible upon her countenance. Like a war-horse at the smell of powder, she metaphorically rose and pawed the air.

"It proves nothing at all," she said, the plumes on her bonnet trembling with indignation. "Mr. Hennaberry is the guilty party, and I am going to prove it."

"How, madame?" sobbed Ingeborg.

"I'll follow him," replied Mrs. Hennaberry. "I've forgotten the woman's address, but you were there, and you'll have to find the way again. So come along."

"I cannot, I cannot," sniffled Ingeborg.

"Ingeborg, you're a fool," remarked Mrs. Hennaberry.

"Yes, madame," came in a limp tone from behind the handkerchief.

"I want you to stop that exhibition, and get on your hat," commanded Mrs. Hennaberry, beginning to hustle on her own wrap.

"You have no respect for feelings of the heart," wept Ingeborg.

"How can I respect anything when you sit there looking like a picture of early spring?" was Mrs. Hennaberry's sarcastic comment. "Come along."

"I cannot, I cannot, my nerves they tremble everywhere," complained Ingeborg.

"Look at me. I am calm! I am cool!" retorted Mrs. Hennaberry; but as her hat had raked to one side, her coat was bunched in the back, and she was unsuccessfully trying to put a right hand into a left glove, her words did not carry much conviction. "I shall not depart by one iota from the allotted routine of the day," she continued. "I shall attend the Meeting of the Society of Brotherly Love; I'll settle that! I shall see about the purchase of a house for

Flora's children ; I'll settle that ! And then —" as she spoke a red gleam came into Mrs. Hennaberry's eye.

"Oh ! madame, madame, what shall we do ?" wailed the unhappy Ingeborg.

"I don't know what you are going to do," replied Mrs. Hennaberry, "but I am going to raise the devil. Come along, you idiot."

CHAPTER IX

DR. MARSHALL PAYS ANOTHER CALL

"OH! mother, they're beginning to light the lights in the palace already!"

Dulcie was kneeling on her little green chair by the window, and Beulah had drawn her sewing-machine to the center of the room, so that she might have the benefit, not only of the pair of feeble gas jets suspended from the ceiling, but of the ruddy reflection of sunlight thrown in a flood from the windows of the warehouse by the river; for when the setting sun had reached a certain point, it made the gloomy old building look as if each pane were illuminated by a thousand crimson lamps. Every evening when it was clear, Dulcie watched for this phenomenon, because after that had happened, she knew that the fairy lights of the bridge would soon begin to twinkle out too.

"Mother, do you think they will have chicken at the palace to-night, or do you think they will have lamb?" she asked presently.

But Beulah was too busy over her work to play imagination games. "I don't know, dear," she answered absently. "Perhaps they will have both."

"Oh! but, mother, they couldn't have both," cried Dulcie, overwhelmed at the mere thought of such luxury. "Which one do you think it will be?"

"I think it is going to be lamb," finally decided Beulah.

"I guess so too." Dulcie sighed for the poor people in the palace. "They did have chicken last night."

At this moment a terrifying sound arose on the outskirts of the kingdom; sharp, staccato, it seemed to rise from the bowels of the earth, growing in intensity as it approached, and accompanied by blood-curdling war-whoops.

Beulah looked up startled, but Dulcie, getting off her chair, hastened to reassure her mother. "Don't be frightened," she said, laying her hand on Beulah's arm. "It's only 'the heathen that rage.'"

Beulah laughed. "How has the enemy been to-day?" she asked.

"Pretty lively, thank you," replied Dulcie.

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"They beat on the door with an old tin pan, and yelled and yelled."

Beulah looked worried. "They've been beating on the door again! I saw the catch was loosened. Oh dear! I suppose this means another scene with Mrs. O'Donovan," she sighed.

"Don't be unhappy," — Dulcie's little face was full of courage, — "I wasn't afraid. I made my voice way down deep like this" — she was now an old witch with husky speech and hawk-like talons — "and I said, 'I'm a witch, and I'll turn you all into little red mices.' And they just beat it."

"They did what, Dulcie?" exclaimed Beulah, who found it one of her hardest tasks to convince Dulcie that "heathen" was one of the rôles that princesses never assumed.

"Well that's what Micky the Scout told 'em to do, and they seemed to do it right away," Dulcie explained, and then to change the conversation, "Mother, what's an Orstpitaler?"

"What do you mean, dear?" asked Beulah.

"That's what they called me through the door, an Orstpitaler. What is it?"

With a quick movement, Beulah pushed aside

her work, gathered Dulcie into her lap, and put her arms around her as if to infold her away from the troubles and heartaches of the world.

"Now, Dulcie," she began, "you know I've told you 'the heathen that rage' use a very different language from ours, and that is why we must never speak like them or even try to understand all that they say. Do you see, dear?"

"Yes'm," replied Dulcie dutifully, but the desire to be "grewed-up," and know everything, expressed itself in a deep sigh.

By this time the war-like sounds had reached the castle gates; a furious bang reverberated upon the portal, and before Beulah could reach it, the enemy was in retreat again, and the slam of a distant door proclaimed that they had reached sanctuary in the domain of the O'Donovan flat.

Beulah was such an adept at minding her own business, that she had become a general favorite in the house. Now, however, she found herself facing war with Mrs. O'Donovan, for she was quite capable of giving battle for Dulcie's sake, and had done so on more than one occasion. She was in no doubt as to who the offenders were, for the door of the O'Donovan flat had not closed

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before she had caught sight of two sturdy little figures disappearing behind it.

"Micky the Scout" was a hardened young ruffian of the age of eight, who was the leader of the neighborhood gang, and renowned along the entire block for feats of prowess. His sister Blanche, or "Blawnche" as she was known in the family, having been named in honor of a French heroine that Mrs. O'Donovan had seen on the stage, was a young lady of six, who might be said to lay good claim to the distinction of introducing the slit skirt into Jackson Street, as she was never known to appear in any other attire for more than five consecutive minutes. She played the rôle of esquire to her brother in all his knightly adventures, and as a matter of fact was hardly second to him in deeds of daring along the water-front. Three times had she been rescued from a watery grave, and once she had achieved the signal honor of spending the night in the police station, having lost herself on far-off Canal Street, whence she was escorted by an almost frantic mother, a visibly swelling brother, and a whole procession of interested friends. After that Micky felt that she had lived down such shame as attached to her sex in

general, and admitted her to the profession of arms in which he excelled, and she proved an invaluable aid-de-camp.

His own activities were ceaseless; his mechanical skill was extraordinary and he used it in inventing ingenious instruments of torture to use against the neighbors. His latest contrivance was a piece of steel umbrella rib fixed to a lath, which when drawn along the railing of a banister, produced a sound not unlike that of the tom-tom of the Indian combined with a steam whistle, which struck terror to the hearts of his enemies.

Yet was there a softer side to Micky the Scout; a touch of heart leavened the fierce resoluteness of his character. To see him taking "Blawnche" for an airing, in an elegant go-cart constructed of a soap box and a pair of wooden wheels, to see Blanche's graceful condescension as she trundled along, an American flag over one shoulder, and a mangy kitten reposing on one knee, was to behold our hero in the more informal aspects of home life.

Both the children looked on Dulcie as a being of another world; and while they felt it necessary in self-respect to assert their independence, and

defiance of all such unneighborly aloofness as might be construed to mean stuck-upishness, by calling names through the door, they did not bear her any real animosity. Their deadly foe, between whom an incessant and pitiless warfare raged, was Elvira Giulia Vanni, who lived with her parents on the fourth floor rear.

Signor Vanni, her papa, was a respected member of the community; he kept a little watch store, and was something of a hand as a locksmith as well. Some years ago the romance of his life had occurred; from his seat in the balcony of the Teatro Garibaldi on Fourth Street, his heart had leaped clear across the footlights to land at the feet of Signorina Giulia Fossetta, who was nimbly pirouetting in the opera ballet there.

With ardor he had wooed and won the hand of the fair ballerina, and when family cares and increasing avoirdupois had finally forced Signora Vanni to retire into private life, the memory of those glorious days still cast a halo around her that set her apart from the common herd. Together from the top gallery of the Metropolitan, they occasionally watched the great ones of the dancing world perform, and as Pavlova or Genée

would perform some bewildering feat of technique, Signor Vanni would smilingly pat his wife's hand and say, "Good! good!—but not like you, mamma!"

On such evenings Signora Vanni lived her past triumphs over again, and she determined that her little girl should drain the cup of delight which she felt that she had but tasted. As soon as her little legs were strong enough, Elvira's training was begun, and it was not long before Signora Vanni was proudly leading her to the dancing academy every day. She had entered that paradise which awaits all good ballet girls — she had become a professional mamma.

But to the O'Donovan children the airs that Elvira began to give herself after her admission to the academy, were an indignity not to be borne. When at the end of six months' practise all that Signorina Vanni could show for her money was the ability to stand on the ends of her toes, and when she proudly displayed this accomplishment to Micky, his only reply was, "Ah! Blawnche c'd do better'n dat, if y'd git er blocks fer her toes." Which contemptuous reference to her treasured ballet slippers sent Elvira home squalling, and precipitated an international war be-

tween Signora Vanni and Mrs. O'Donovan that lasted for two days.

Then Micky began to frequent the cheap vaudeville houses on the Bowery, and in three days his quick Irish wits and quicker Irish legs had mastered a buck and wing that fully made up in "punch" what it lacked in classic form.

This he in turn displayed at home, to be greeted with jeers by Elvira, and again warfare raged between the mothers. Signor Vanni shared his wife's contempt for such unacademic performances, and when the conflicts between the two families became too fierce, he occasionally took a hand in them himself. Mr. O'Donovan, on the other hand, was a peaceable man. He was a somewhat obscure figure, who left at six-thirty in the morning, dinner-pail in hand, returned at six P.M., to wash and get his supper, and again disappeared until bed-time.

"Let her alone," he would say, with a wink in the direction of his better half. "She could lick the entire house with wan arm tied behind her."

It was quite true; Mrs. O'Donovan had a fist as big as her heart, and she dealt out good turns and hard words as necessity demanded and with

equal heartiness. Her family lived between a feast and a famine; O'Donovan drew good pay, and every Saturday night Mrs. O'Donovan started out to buy up Grand Street. The consequence was that on Sunday morning the O'Donovan flat resembled a gala day in the five and ten cent store. What mattered it that by Wednesday at the latest, most of the things had been smashed by Micky and Blanche, or given and lent to the neighbors of the different flats? Was not Saturday night only three days off, and as Mrs. O'Donovan said, she "loved a change."

"From rags to riches," quoted Blanche from a melodramatic poster on a near-by fence, as she was dragged from mud pies in the alley to be arrayed in a really beautiful embroidered muslin dress that had caught Mrs. O'Donovan's eye in a shop window; and "From riches to rags" she might just as aptly have observed a few hours later when she had returned to that pleasing occupation regardless of her toilet.

These, with Frau Bundefelder, were the neighbors who shared the fourth floor with Beulah. On the lower stories were families of varying nationalities; but the fourth floor lodgers were the ones with whom she came in closer contact,

and they it was who created the conditions to which she now had to adjust her life. She sometimes tried to induce Frau Bundefeller to move with her to a different neighborhood; for as the years passed and no attempt to gain possession of Dulcie was made by the Hennaberrys, her fear began to pass away. But the old lady had become settled in her ways; the idea of again rearranging her life was too much for her.

"No," she would answer, shaking her head determinedly. "I haf gone up — I haf com down — I vill stay." And so she stayed on, the arbiter of the little colony. She it was in whose little rooms the conflicting parties met on neutral grounds to declare an amnesty; and if on occasions she found it necessary to administer correction to one of the children, and so ran afoul of a pugnacious mother, it was soon acknowledged that her interference was quite impersonal; and for the general welfare of the community. A genial "But, ladies, let's keep everydings pleasant" restored peace.

Beulah had scarcely seated herself again at the machine, when there was a sound of footsteps on the narrow stairs; an elaborate double-

knock thundered at the door, and a hearty voice responded in answer to her question, "It's I, the Court Physician, your Imperial Highness."

"Come in," laughed Beulah.

As the doctor made a dramatic entrance with a sweeping court bow to Dulcie, the catch of the door, which had been loosened by the attacks of the O'Donovan children, snapped and fell to the floor. Marshall stooped and picked it up.

"There! see what I've done," he exclaimed remorsefully.

"Don't bother," Beulah reassured him. "It's really not your fault. Those bad O'Donovan children worked it loose this morning."

"You haven't kissed my hand yet," interrupted Dulcie severely, who objected to her game being neglected in this way.

Marshall, thus reprimanded, drew himself to his full height, made another deep obeisance, and repaired the omission. "A thousand apologies, your Serene Highness. Please don't have me sent to the dungeons or the scaffold this time," he begged. "This is my busy day."

"Very well, I won't this time," replied Dulcie, holding up a warning finger, "but don't disremember again."

Marshall turned his attention to the door once more, and found it in bad shape. "May I have the hammer?" he asked.

Beulah hesitated; there were such a number of things that should have been in that flat and were not. "I'm sorry, I haven't such a thing in the house," she confessed.

"A screw-driver?" demanded the inconsiderate doctor.

"Nothing stronger than my scissors," answered Beulah, and as he came toward her, she hastily put them in her sewing-basket. "No, you can't have them, and you can't fix my door until I go to one of the neighbors and borrow hammer and nails. Now I've told you."

Then it was the doctor's turn to become embarrassed. "Forgive me," he begged. "I'm always saying something clumsy to you. I don't seem to make so many blunders with other people. Why do you suppose it is?"

But Beulah did not answer, so presently he had to go on rather lamely, "I suppose it's because I'm always trying to do the right thing with you. The right thing just has to do itself, doesn't it?"

Still she made no reply. His tone had taken

on an intimate quality, of which she had come to be afraid, so she worked on rapidly without noticing his remark."

But the doctor was not to be put off so easily. "Why won't you answer my question?" he asked.

"I haven't time to puzzle out ethical problems to-day," she said carelessly. "I have to get this work finished and up at Fourteenth Street by five o'clock."

The doctor jumped at the opportunity. "Why mightn't I go up there with you?" he asked cheerfully.

"I thought this was your busy day," she rejoined slyly.

"My business lies up at about Fourteenth Street too," replied the doctor, making an engagement with himself on the spot.

"It's half-past four now," said Beulah, glancing out the window at the clock on the factory building.

"Oh! I don't have to get there before five," replied the unabashed doctor; and as he saw that she was going to make a new objection, he added, "Or a little after five."

Beulah gave up the contest in despair, and returned to her work.

"We're going to have Christmas carols this evening," began Dulcie, who had been looking out the window into the gathering dusk.

"At the mission?" asked Marshall, with a glance out at the little brick building, almost invisible in the dark street below.

Dulcie held up a warning finger. "You mustn't call it that; that is the Cathedral." And the doctor apologized like a gentleman.

"Have you brought me any candy?" demanded the princess, returning to the practical needs of everyday, and feeling that the doctor was not playing the game at all well.

"Didn't I give it to you?" he asked, beginning to go through his pockets in contrite haste. "Ah! there we are!" he cried, holding up a little brown package triumphantly. "A great big cake of milk chocolate. I bought it of the orange woman" — again the admonishing finger warned him — "I crave your Highness' pardon, from the Witch of Endor, the entrance to whose subterranean cavern is on yonder corner near the palace gates."

"That's better!" cried Dulcie, clapping her hands at the magnificent gestures with which the doctor illustrated his speech. Then she took the candy and examined it gravely.

"Perhaps she has bewitched the candy, and when I eat it, I shall grow as big — as big — like 'Alice in Wonderland.'"

But Beulah now thought it time to end the imagination game; she had a few words to say to the doctor, that could not be said before Dulcie. To-day there had been a something in his eyes, a tenderness in his voice, that had never been there before; she was afraid that he would speak when they should have left the house, and she determined to forestall the confession that she dreaded, now; here where she had Dulcie, the surroundings of her old life to keep her strong.

"Run into the other room, dear," she said gently. "And mind, don't eat too much candy."

Dulcie obediently left the room, but mindful of Alice, she stopped in the doorway to warn the doctor, "Remember, if you hear me swelling, you must come in quick and give me something."

"It's really too bad of you to encourage Dulcie in all this nonsense," began Beulah when they were alone, and trying to look as severe as she could.

"Oh come! I wasn't the one who started it, you know," replied the doctor. He seated himself comfortably at her side by the machine, and

began to examine the needles and scissors with as much respect as if they had been a case of rare and precious instruments.

"I scarcely know how it started," admitted Beulah with a sigh. "Frank used to think it fun to hear her run on, and I haven't had the heart to put a stop to it since. It seemed to make a little world of happiness for her, to believe that the fairy stories I told her were really happening around her. But now that she's going to get well and strong" — she turned and faced him with a pretty earnestness — "I want her to live in a real world, not a fairy tale, Dr. Marshall."

"'Dr. Marshall!' I've asked you to use my first name. Don't you remember it?" asked the doctor, and he answered her look with such directness that instinctively she dropped her eyes. "Don't you?" he repeated, and now she had risen and was going toward the window. "Why won't you answer my question?" he insisted.

"I'm almost afraid to tell you just how I am going to answer it," she replied, devoutly wishing that she had left well enough alone, and never broached such a difficult subject as this was proving to be. "I've been thinking of late that

you spend entirely too much time on Dulcie and me."

"But, Beulah," began the doctor, but she cut him short.

"No — please — I'm grateful, I can't tell you how grateful, for all you've done for us; how easy you made it for us that day at the hospital; I don't know what we should have done without you, but" — an idea came to her and she clutched at it eagerly — "I have to be frank, you must see it for yourself, I can't afford to have a doctor in constant attendance."

It did not sound very convincing to her as she said it, but the doctor was quite nonplused. "Why surely you didn't think," he started; but Beulah discovering that she had carried war into the enemy's camp with success, followed up her victory. "This makes four times this week," she said firmly.

"Oh! not four times — not four!" said the doctor, sparring for time. She gave a decided nod. "No, I don't think it can be more than three."

"Four," reiterated Beulah. "And so I must ask you not to come so often in the future."

"Then all the little walks from work, and

evening talks around the stove, are ended?" The disappointment in his face made her heart contract sympathetically.

"I'm afraid so," she faltered.

"But why? Have I done anything?" the hurt voice asked, and she hastened to reassure him with a quick "No."

"Then what is it, unless I've changed?"

The defenses were all down now. "Oh! why won't you do what I ask without all these questions?"

The doctor rose. "Because I've never given up anything easily in my life, and I'm not going to this time," he said quietly; and then a smile crept into his eyes. "You'll have to overwhelm me with logic before I stay away."

The smile had lost him his advantage. "Well then, say it is because I do not care to have the neighbors talk," said Beulah curtly. "When it was for Dulcie's health, well and good, but now that the danger is all over—" A change came over the doctor's face, and as Beulah saw it, her instinct warned her of what was coming, and her heart seemed to falter and stand still. Mutely she held out her hands to him, and his answering voice was tender as a woman's.

"But, Mrs. Randolph, the danger is not all over," he said simply.

"What do you mean?" she stammered, and now unconsciously she came to him and laid her hand upon his arm; she had lost sight of the man, she was a mother facing the physician of her child. "You said — I understood you to say the other day — Oh! what is it?" she implored.

"I didn't want to alarm you until Dr. Clark had seen Dulcie," he replied. "After the consultation on Wednesday we had a long talk; he seems to be afraid that it is going to be absolutely necessary to —"

"To operate?" she interrupted, the words ending in a sob.

"Don't let's use that word," he tried to make his voice as cheery as possible. "Let's say, resort to a little ingenuity."

"But when — when?" she implored.

"Within the next ten days; a crisis might occur and then it would have to be at once."

"At once!" she echoed. "I can't seem to take it in; I don't see what's left for me." A dark cloud seemed to settle down over her; she sank into the chair by the machine and buried her face on her arms.

Marshall bent over her, his one thought to fight the fears that were encompassing her about, and drive them back. "Don't take it like that," he urged. "You're not looking at it straight. Modern surgery isn't an ugly thing; it's beautiful! Why think! this is going to make Dulcie well and strong and free. Don't you see it?"

But Beulah could only reply hopelessly, "That's easy for you to say; this is only another 'case' to you."

"More than that, Beulah, much more," he pleaded. "Won't you let me make it more? Let me help you to bear it."

Her tears, her despair, made him suffer keenly, gripped him with a desire to put his arms around her and shield her from the troubles of the world; the words that had lain silent on his lips for many years came instinctively, "Beulah, I love you."

But to her they did not come as a relief from sorrow; to her they only seemed ill-timed and cruel. It gave her strength to rise and with a look give him the answer that she had prayed that she might be able to give him if the question came.

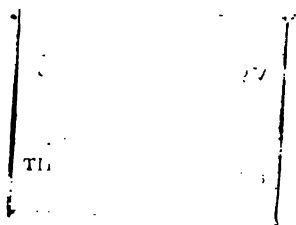
He turned away.

"I'm sorry. I tried to spare you," she said simply and waited for him to go.



"Don't take it like that," he urged.

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But the doctor was made of finer metal. "I understand," he said, holding out his hand. "Forget what I said, and try to think of me just as a friend. Won't you let me stay and help you as a friend?"

And Beulah, looking steadily into his honest eyes for the first time, was able to put her hand in his and answer, "Yes."

"May I come in now?" asked Dulcie, putting her head in at the door. "I ate most half my chocolate, but there haven't been any complications so far," she announced.

Beulah bent over the cheap waists that she was packing into a small box to carry uptown, so that Dulcie might not see the tears that were still wet on her cheeks. But the child did not notice anything, for she had caught sight of the fairy bridge outside whose lights were gleaming through the heavy twilight.

"Look! look!" she cried. "The bridge to Camelot is lighting up!"

Then she turned to Beulah, wistfully. "Mother, why can't we have a Christmas like the stories you read about?"

Beulah put her arms about the child and drew

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her close. "I'll tell you why, dearest," she explained. "You see Santa Claus has so many little children to visit to-night in this big city, poor little children, who haven't beautiful golden fancies to play with all day long; and so he might think a little princess had enough without his coming here to-night at all."

In her trouble she had unconsciously turned back to the fairy tale world in which she had kept Dulcie safe from the worries of to-day. "Don't you see, dear?" she pleaded eagerly.

"I see," replied Dulcie, and then as her mother began to put on her hat and coat, she turned to the doctor, who was never known to fail in an emergency. "I don't suppose one of the Christmas angels might be disengaged? I wouldn't expect a very good one — just a little Christmas angel. What do you think, Court Physician?"

"It wouldn't surprise me at all if a lovely Christmas angel came this evening," replied the doctor confidently. "Only you mustn't be surprised if you don't recognize it, because when Christmas angels walk the earth, they sometimes wear strange forms."

Dulcie pondered a moment over this new piece of fairy lore. "They sometimes wear strange

forms," she repeated. Then she laughed, and in the laugh was reflected all the confidence of the doctor's tone. "All right," she said happily. "I'll watch hard."

"Come, doctor, we're late," called Beulah.

"That door hasn't been fixed yet," he reminded her.

"We haven't got time now," she replied. "But it's all right. Frau Bundefeller is at home, and I'll ask her to see that those bad O'Donovan children don't beat on it while I'm away."

She came to Dulcie and kissed her again, tenderly, yet fearful that the child might guess something of what was passing within her breast.

"Put a chair against the door, dearest," she warned her, "and if you hear anyone in the hall, go into the bed-room and lock yourself in."

"Why! I'm not afraid, mother," answered Dulcie, who was accustomed to spend many hours of the day alone.

So the doctor and Beulah, after the usual ceremonies of the court, went away together, and Dulcie was left alone to guard the castle.

After she had waved them good-bye when they reached the corner of the street, she fetched one of the chairs and set it as well as she could against

the broken door ; then she sought her confidential companion, Guinevere, daughter of a king, and together they entered the pleasant kingdom of the imagination.

They perched themselves by the window, and looked out into the gathering night. "You must keep your eyes wide open, Guinevere," Dulcie warned the doll, "for when they walk the earth, they sometimes wear strange forms."

CHAPTER X

MRS. HENNABERRY INVADES THE SLUMS

IT was indeed a busy day for Mrs. Hennaberry. Feeling within herself a volcanic power created by her indignation, she made up her mind to settle affairs in general before she slept.

The only trouble with Mrs. Hennaberry's activities was that she entirely lacked concentration; she could attack anything with a force that was irresistible, but she had to do it quickly before she forgot what she was about. The next thing that happened to interest her promptly claimed her attention to the exclusion of all former plans. I dread to think what the consequences might have been if she had descended on Jackson Street in the first flush of her anger.

However, by the time she had finished with the Ladies' Committee of the Society of Brotherly Love, having laid out enough work for the members of that executive branch to keep them occupied for several months; then having gathered a large armful of pamphlets from various agencies,

"And this is the place for which Mr. Hennaberry leaves a home on Washington Square to spend his evenings in!" ejaculated Mrs. Hennaberry, stopping to gaze around the narrow passage in strong disapproval.

At that moment a near-by door opened and an inquisitive head was thrust out into the hall.

"Where does Mrs. Randolph live?" inquired Mrs. Hennaberry.

"Randolph? — fourth floor," and the door closed with a slam in Mrs. Hennaberry's face.

Cautiously mistress and maid began to climb the cement stairs. They had just completed two of the flights, when there was a scurry in the hall, and Mrs. Hennaberry felt something dart by her and up the stairs; with a scream she raised her skirts, certain that the place was infested by rats.

It proved to be a small boy with towsled head, and a moment later a second scurry attended the passing of a smaller brat of a girl. Armed with sticks they proceeded to the top floor and began beating lustily on the door of Mrs. Randolph's flat.

"Orstpitaler ! orstpitaler !" screamed Blanche.

"Wait till der stujents git yer," yelled Micky.

A door across the hall opened and Frau Bundefelder put her head out. "Go away! go away!" she scolded. "You teufelkinder, you are no goot. Go away!"

The O'Donovan children immediately turned their batteries on Germany. "Aw! gwan! y'eat too much cabbage," giped Micky.

"Dutchy, dutchy sauerkraut!" chanted Blanche, keeping time with a weird little dance step.

Frau Bundefelder rushed back into her room, and reappeared pail in hand.

"I vill gif you a taste of vasser, so I vill," she threatened.

"Dutchy, dutchy sauerkraut!" shrilled Blanche, accompanying her song with a frightful grimace at the old woman.

Splash! went the contents of the pail. Micky ducked to safety, but Blanche, too late, was shaking herself a moment after like a wet spaniel; and the flying drops scattered in all directions, some of them lighting on the ascending heads of Mrs. Hennaberry and her maid.

"Ma! ma! she's soused Blawnche!" came in a scandalized voice from Micky.

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A door opened farther down the hall and a burly form issued forth.

"The dutch butcheress!" chimed in the angry tones of Mrs. O'Donovan. "Now darlin' Blawnche'll have pewmonia. I'll taych ye!" she shouted, advancing and rolling up her sleeves.

"Ja, unt I vill teeche you!" retorted Frau Bundefelder facing her.

Mrs. Hennaberry, half-way up the last flight, saw that not a minute was to be lost if battle was to be averted. "Stop that at once! At once, do you hear me? *I* am coming up," she called.

The angry voices of the astonished women died away; nothing like this had ever been seen in Jackson Street before. Under ordinary circumstances Mrs. O'Donovan would have been quick to resent any interference from the pampered rich in her home life, but under the belligerent eye of Mrs. Hennaberry, she found herself beginning to explain, "Well, ma'am, you see —"

"Not another word!" interrupted Mrs. Hennaberry. "In which of these doors does Mrs. Randolph live?"

It was now Frau Bundefelder's turn to take the floor in behalf of her absent friend. "Honored

lady," she began in her softest tones, "permeet me to say der door is locked at Mrs. Randolph's. You cannot go in."

"Nonsense!" returned Mrs. Hennaberry, "I can get in anywhere." She turned to her aide-de-camp. "Open the door, Ingeborg," she ordered as calmly as she might have ordered a cup of coffee at breakfast.

Ingeborg obediently pushed at the door, and to her surprise it seemed to give a little; she finally managed to get her hand in, and then the door stuck again, nor could she find what it was that resisted her.

"There seems to be an obstacle," she reported.

"Take your big, clumsy hands out of the way, and let me do it," commanded the impatient Mrs. Hennaberry; and paying no attention to the protests of Frau Bundefelder, she put her own hand in, found the back of the chair, sent it tumbling to the floor, and marched into the castle with flying colors.

Frau Bundefelder followed her protesting, but she suddenly found herself bundled into the hall with a "Go away and mind your own business." And with this Mrs. Hennaberry slammed the door in the faces of the inquisitive neighbors.

Then she put on her glasses and took a survey of the quarters in which she found herself.

"The trouble with this room is the color scheme," she finally announced. "A delicate salmon with white woodwork would transform the place. And, Ingeborg, did you notice those stairs as we came up? They should have been broken with a landing half-way up. I could have told the man who built them how they ought to have been done in about five minutes."

But Ingeborg was standing silently in the middle of the room, and the tears were coursing steadily down her florid cheeks. "Oh! Abraham!" she murmured brokenly.

Mrs. Hennaberry suddenly remembered what she had come for. "It isn't Abraham," she said sharply. "Mr. Hennaberry is the guilty party and see how calm *I* am."

Then she sighed. "Ingeborg, the idea that Mr. Hennaberry would ever have the spunk to take a step of this kind had never occurred to me. I really can't make up my mind what to do about it."

Ingeborg's answer was prompt and decisive: "If I were a woman of madame's social position, revenge would be easy; I would take divorce — with alimonies."

"Ingeborg, you're a fool!" replied Mrs. Hennaberry, to which Ingeborg returned her usual "Yes, madame."

"What would I do all divorced by myself up in that big house on Washington Square?" Mrs. Hennaberry went on. But as she was speaking, a new object of interest caught her wandering eye.

"Ingeborg," she said, pointing to the window, "while you are not doing anything, you might just as well rub the spot off that lower, left-hand pane. Ugh! it makes me nervous to look at it."

But every inch of Ingeborg's square figure rebelled. "I touch a window in the house of that serpent?" she cried indignantly. "Never! madame, never! Oh! Abraham! Abraham!" And again she buried her face in her already sopping handkerchief.

"Don't argue," said Mrs. Hennaberry, who never allowed that privilege to others. "Do you realize that we are in a highly dangerous neighborhood? We may both be murdered before we leave this den."

Ingeborg shivered with terror. "Oh! madame! let us leave at once," she implored.

"No," said Mrs. Hennaberry with dignity.

muff dismally grasped in one hand, and her moist handkerchief in the other.

"Is she an angel too?" she asked.

"Yes," answered Mrs. Hennaberry as seriously as she could, and then a second glance compelled her to add, "But she's in strange form."

"And now you must tell me about yourself, little girl," she said, motioning Dulcie to come to her.

"I'm not a little girl," replied Dulcie, proudly drawing herself up, "I'm a princess."

The astonished Mrs. Hennaberry could only ejaculate, "Eh?"

"Yes, and my mother is a queen," Dulcie went on. "This is our palace — only it isn't a very good one because we are usurped." She had to take a long breath to get this hard word out.

"Dear me! who did that?" exclaimed Mrs. Hennaberry.

"I don't know, but we are. And that is why I can't have dresses of samite white, and eat from gold plates; and every day my mother has to go over the beautiful bridge into Camelot to earn our daily bread."

"And what do you do?" asked Mrs. Hennaberry.

"I? Oh! I stay here and defend the castle against the enemy."

"Who are the enemy?" Mrs. Hennaberry found it rather hard to get her geography straight in this new country.

"The heathen that rage," replied Dulcie, and then seeing that the old lady did not understand, "They abound on the borders of our kingdom, and their hand is against every man."

Still Mrs. Hennaberry did not understand. But Ingeborg, listening at the door, had heard sounds of gathering warfare below, and she now broke in with, "If you please, madame, I think she means the little blackguard children who were on the stairs."

"Yes, of course," chimed in Dulcie. "But they don't know that I am a princess; and that is why I must be very patient with them, and love them that hate me, and not care very much to do the things that other children do." She came wistfully to Mrs. Hennaberry. "But Christmas is different, isn't it? And I hadn't any Christmas at all this year." Her arms were around Mrs. Hennaberry, and one soft little cheek was pressed against the old one. "It wasn't wrong of me to wish so hard for just one

Christmas angel, was it? And I couldn't help crying just a little — but you won't go away, will you — please?"

"Not until you have had a Christmas — a real one," replied Mrs. Hennaberry warmly, and in that moment she capitulated to Dulcie for all time.

At this juncture the returning noise of the invader was heard from afar, and Dulcie with a warning "Sh!" ran up to listen at the door.

"What is it?" asked Mrs. Hennaberry.

"The heathen that rage," replied Dulcie, with the best imitation that she could give of Dr. Marshall's dramatic style.

Indeed the words were unnecessary, for just then the enemy reached the door and began such a series of thumps and bangs, that it sounded as if the house were coming down about their ears.

"This is outrageous! I'll soon put a stop to it!" exclaimed Mrs. Hennaberry indignantly, and gathering her silk skirts about her to still their rustle, she ordered Dulcie and Ingeborg to retire to the corner, and advanced upon the enemy single-handed.

Imagine the consternation of poor Blanche, who was just executing a wild fandango before

the door, when it opened, a head in a formidable black silk bonnet was thrust out, and next came a fat black hand which grabbed the unfortunate youngster and drew her within the castle gates.

She promptly let out a roar which rose in a crescendo of agonizing fear until it became articulate in these words: "I didn't do nuttin, lady; honest t'Gawd! I didn't do nuttin."

"Oh! you bad, bad child! How dare you do such things! Now I've *got* you!" cried Mrs. Hennaberry; and these words raised such an awful picture of her impending doom to Blanche's youthful mind, that after a few turns and twists that left most of her clothes, which Mrs. Hennaberry still tightly grasped, in a bunch behind her left ear, she fell on the floor and gave vent to her feelings in a prolonged roar.

But help was near; her valiant brother had fled on the first sortie from the castle, thinking that as usual on such occasions, Blanche would follow closely in the rear. When he looked around and she was nowhere to be seen, the awful truth dawned upon him: Blanche was a captive.

But fear was an unknown quantity in the breast of Micky the Scout. In a bound he was back home, grabbed a base ball bat, and flew to the

rescue. With one kick he sent the door flying open, and rushed upon the foe.

"Let er go, let er go, or I'll lam yer," he shouted, dancing around Mrs. Hennaberry, and aiming his bat at her after the manner of a professional batsman on the *qui vive* in expectation of a swift ball.

But Mrs. Hennaberry never yielded a step; she kept a firm hold on the struggling Blanche with one hand, while she shook the other at Micky and exclaimed, "If you hit me with that stick, you will be very sorry; I shall tell the policeman."

The defiant base ball bat wavered; Micky felt as Macbeth must have felt when he learned that supernatural forces were in league against him. "Gee! d'you know der p'liceman?" he asked in awed tones.

Mrs. Hennaberry saw her advantage and pursued it. "He's a very intimate friend of mine," she said. "And I know the mayor too."

The limp base ball bat sank to the floor. "Gee! Blawnche, it's all up. She's got a pull," said Micky sadly. After all no man can fight against fate, and as Blanche's voice began to rise again in a wail of despair, he merely counseled stoicism in a curt, "Shut up, Blawnche!"

"What was that you called her?" asked Mrs.

Hennaberry, who was not conversant with pure Jackson Street French.

"Blawnche," explained Micky. "Dat was de name of a lady me mudder saw in a show up at de Fourteent Street Teayter de night *she* was born. She was a Rooshan lady wot almost got blowed up by dynamite, but de heero got dere just before she blew, an put er out, so me mudder called er Blawnche. But most of de people around here call er Snags." Whereupon Blanche obligingly opened her mouth to proudly display a set of gums that were undergoing that interesting period known as "losing the baby teeth."

"I see," said Mrs. Hennaberry. "And what is your name?"

"Michael Patrick Dennis O'Donovan," was the reply. "But me pals call me de Scout."

"Well now, Michael Patrick Dennis O'Donovan, what makes you behave so badly to this little girl?" said Mrs. Hennaberry, assuming as stern an air as she could.

Blanche, who had managed to wriggle out of Mrs. Hennaberry's clutches, now made a dive and got behind Micky, from which point of vantage she wailed, "We didn't do nuttin, lady, honest t'Gawd! we didn't do nuttin."

"Wot's de use? You don't git none," Micky reminded her. "Gee! Blawnche, ain't dat tough?"

Blanche's face contracted into a mournful picture of woe.

"Come on, Blawnche; we don't stand in here. We'd better beat it," said Micky, and he seized his sister, and began to drag her toward the door in spite of her shrill protests.

But Dulcie ran to Mrs. Hennaberry and caught her hand. "Oh! mightn't they please stay, Mrs. Christmas Angel?" she pleaded. "The littlest heathen looks as if a party would do her such a lot of good, and I don't really mind the names they called me. Remember, they don't know that I am a princess."

The O'Donovans were almost out the door, but Mrs. Hennaberry stopped them. "Michael Patrick Dennis O'Donovan, wait!" she commanded, and as the Scout turned back, she asked, "Would you like to stay to the party?"

"Would I like t'stay t'de party?" exclaimed Micky in tones of stinging sarcasm. "Would I like? Say, talk reason, talk reason."

"Well, if you behave yourself like a gentleman, you can stay," announced Mrs. Hennaberry.

"Gee! d'yer mean it?" cried Micky unable to believe his ears, and then as a full realization of it all came over him, his features gradually broadened into a delighted grin. "Say, you're all right," he beamed; and then tapping his chest confidentially, he said, "And from dis time out, de kid is under me pertection; she stands in, see?"

This was too much for Mrs. Hennaberry and she actually broke out into a chuckle. "Very well then, if she stands in with you, you stand in with me." And she continued to shake with laughter, until looking up, she beheld Ingeborg with her stupid mouth wide open, staring at her mistress as if she thought she had taken leave of her senses. "Sit down," roared Mrs. Hennaberry in such ferocious tones that Ingeborg sank into a chair behind the stove utterly overcome.

Meantime Dulcie had gone to comfort Blanche, who was still weeping at the door. Micky now approached them. "Ain't she a slick old girl?" he said with a nod in the direction of Mrs. Hennaberry.

"Sh!" cautioned Dulcie, "You mustn't speak that way of her. Don't you know who she is?"

"Nah! who is she?" asked matter-of-fact Micky.

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"She is a Christmas angel," answered Dulcie in tones that caused the other children to turn and view the old lady with heightened respect.

"Gee! is dat wot she is?" asked Micky in an awe-struck voice.

"Yes," Dulcie went on, "Only you wouldn't know it, because she is in strange form."

"In wot?"

"In disguise."

"Wot's dat?"

"You know — all dressed up," Dulcie tried to explain.

A light broke upon Micky. "Oh! like T'anks-givin," he said, sagely nodding his head.

But Mrs. Hennaberry had to keep things busy. "What are you whispering about over there?" she called. "Come right over here and sit down and I'll decide what's to be done about this party."

Micky and Dulcie hastened to obey, but Blanche still lingered at the door. She had received no invitation as yet, and she thought it high time to have her position in the matter defined. "Ain't I goin t'git ast t'dis here blow-out?" she demanded in indignant tones.

"Blow-out!" shuddered Ingeborg from behind

the stove, "Now madame sees the sort of people she is stooping to."

Micky stopped and took a thorough inspection of the Swedish damsel. "Say! who's her nibs?" he queried. "She an angel too?"

"Yes," replied Dulcie.

"Well, she's in disguise all right, all right," said Micky, with a conviction that caused Ingeborg to tilt her nose several inches higher than before.

Meantime Blanche had again been ignored. Indignation filled her small heart, and she determined to appeal to a higher power. Throwing open the door, she bawled in shrill tones, "Ma! ma! I'm bein' froze out!"

"Stop crying," cried Mrs. Hennaberry. "Certainly you're asked. Come here and sit down." She began to marshal the children around her. "Sit there, Micky — come here beside me, princess — take your finger out of your mouth, Blanche. Now I am going to tell you a story. What shall it be?"

The children formed an interested group around her. "Tell us about yourself. Who are you?" cried Dulcie.

"Yes, take off your wig, and tell us your real

name," added Micky, who still fancied that Mrs. Hennaberry was made up for the occasion, and would presently remove her gray hair and false face.

Mrs. Hennaberry gasped; she was not used to being spoken to in that manner. But a second glance at Micky's serious face showed her that it was not from impertinence that he spoke. For the first time it began to dawn on her that here her position, her money carried no weight, and that without external aid, it was up to her to make good before that childish tribunal.

She checked the rebuke that was on her lips and in a mollified tone began, "Well you see, children, I'm really not so much of a Christmas angel as I am a fairy godmother. Now be attentive: once upon a time —"

| But the story was never told. At that moment the door opened, and a face smiling over a great armful of holly appeared in the doorway. Beulah had returned.

Mrs. Hennaberry rose. Though both were unconscious of the fact, Frank's mother and his wife were face to face at last.

CHAPTER XI

HOW MRS. HENNABERRY ROSE TO THE SITUATION

BEULAH was later in returning home than she had expected. She had gotten through her errand in record time, but it was then that the doctor began to misbehave. He seemed determined to make up for all the pain that he had given that day, and he became quite reckless.

First of all he bought a Christmas tree that was so much too big for the flat that Beulah declared that they would have to set it up outside in the street. Then he began to buy ornaments to trim it, and the size of the note he had to break when he came to foot the bill made Beulah first gasp and then scold heartily. Finally she forced him to come home, which they did, laden with boxes, and with a teamster bringing up the rear with the tree.

When they got to the front door, a new difficulty presented itself, for no sooner had the teamster deposited the tree on the pavement

and received his money, than he absolutely refused to help carry it upstairs, jumped up onto his seat, and drove up the street impudently whistling as he went.

This aroused the doctor's ire to such an extent, that he disdained Beulah's offer to get some of the boys in the house to help him, and savagely declared that he was going to get that tree upstairs alone. This he proceeded to do, and encountered such awful difficulties in engineering it around corners, that Beulah declared his looks positively terrified her; and seizing all the boxes, she ran upstairs laughing, and left him to struggle with his undertaking alone.

When she reached her own door, the first thing she discovered was Frau Bundefelder outside on her knees, alternately applying an eye and an ear to the key-hole, and making reports to Mrs. O'Donovan and Signora Vanni, who stood in their respective doorways and commented upon the various items of news as they received them.

As soon as she saw Beulah coming up the stairs, the good frau hastened to tell her that there was a strange old woman in her flat. Beulah did not show so much surprise as the neighbors had all hoped she would. The thought that immediately

flashed through her mind was that this must be the person of whom a Mrs. Palmer had spoken to her.

Mrs. Palmer kept a needlework shop, and often employed Beulah when she had more work than her regular assistants could manage. Several days before she had given Beulah a card of introduction to a lady who wished some sewing done at home. "She's a crank but she's good pay," said plain-spoken Mrs. Palmer. So Beulah's immediate deduction was that this must be the person in question.

"I wonder how she got my address," she said to herself as she entered the room.

As for Mrs. Hennaberry, she was going through some of the most trying moments of her life. She had had so much to occupy her mind that afternoon that she had really not found time to decide just what it was that she had come to do. Her usual plan was to do a thing, and then discover why it was her duty to have done it. But for once her initiative seemed to have deserted her. She saw a pretty young figure enter and deposit a number of boxes on the table; she realized that the woman she had come to seek was before her. But this woman, this beautiful child did not tally

with the picture that her fancy had drawn; she felt bewildered, she tried to summon reason to her aid, and in that moment Henrietta was lost.

"I beg your pardon," said the pleasant, firm voice. "I didn't expect to find anyone here."

"Yes — yes — it is sudden," murmured Mrs. Hennaberry, grasping mentally for some overwhelming word with which to annihilate her adversary. "I came to — to —"

"To get me to do some work for you?" Beulah helped her out. "That is very kind of you. I suppose Mrs. Palmer must have spoken of me?"

Now Henrietta Hennaberry was an unusually truthful woman, but on this occasion she surprised herself. She looked into those quiet eyes and met a determination of will that she had never encountered in her life before; instead of the stinging words she had intended to pour forth, she heard a mild voice that she could hardly recognize as her own, saying, "Yes — yes — she did."

"Won't you sit down?" asked Beulah.

"No — no thank you," Mrs. Hennaberry stumbled on. "Yes — that's it — I wanted some work done. And —" she caught at the nearest

straw — "Ingeborg wanted some work done. Didn't you, Ingeborg?"

But Ingeborg was not to be implicated in any measures that tended toward reconciliation; she was standing with her eyes fixed on Beulah in a dull glare of jealous hatred. "No, madame, I did *not*," she replied vindictively.

Mrs. Hennaberry was nonplused. "Oh no! I forgot, Ingeborg didn't," she said with a little nervous laugh. "But I do — I want some. What kind of work do you do?"

"All kinds of plain and fancy sewing, though I shouldn't care to attempt an elaborate frock," replied Beulah. "Have you brought the work with you?"

Mrs. Hennaberry was getting in deeper and deeper. "No — no — I didn't — not to-day," she hesitated, ashamed to feel that not only was she fibbing, but that she was doing it badly. "You didn't bring it with you, did you, Ingeborg?" she went on and trying by the expression of her eye to indicate the sort of reply that she wished.

But Ingeborg refused to understand. "No, madame, I did *not*," she reiterated.

Then Mrs. Hennaberry had an inspiration; she seized the famous piece of embroidery and

drew it from her hand-bag. "Why I have it with me all the time," she exclaimed. "This is it, and you must get it finished just as quickly as you can. I never had a piece of embroidery that took me so long to get finished. I have more that I will send by the butler in the morning. Good-day, madam. Come, Ingeborg." And feeling that she had partly reestablished her reputation by this last display of ingenuity, she began a hasty retreat toward the door.

But Blanche was before her. Planting herself in the path of the departing Mrs. Hennaberry, she demanded in wrathful tones, "Ain't we goin t'git no blow-out?"

"Stung!" commented Micky disgustedly.

Mrs. Hennaberry blushed; she felt as if she had been caught defrauding the government. "Dear me! I forgot," she exclaimed contritely. Then she turned to Beulah, "Your little girl — the children — it would give me such pleasure to provide them with a little treat."

"No, really I couldn't," began Beulah; but Mrs. Hennaberry went on, "I know it seems presuming, but I gave them my word; I shouldn't like to break it."

Beulah again began to decline, when Dulcie,

who had crept up, interrupted, "Sh! mother, you don't understand. She isn't an old lady, she's a Christmas angel."

"You see!" said Mrs. Hennaberry, as if that explained everything.

Dulcie came and put her arms around Mrs. Hennaberry. "I knew you wouldn't go away and forget us," she whispered. "Even when you were almost out the door, I wasn't afraid. I knew you were trying my faith like Strongheart; I knew you were my Christmas angel, and you couldn't go away."

Mrs. Hennaberry thought of her lonely house in Washington Square, she felt the little arms about her, and something within that was stronger than pride made her realize that she could not leave. "Can you refuse?" she said to Beulah.

"But you are a stranger," demurred Beulah.

"You seem to think I'm trying to do you a favor," urged Mrs. Hennaberry. "I'm not, I'm asking one. I am an old woman; it has been many years since I have had a child's arms around my neck at Christmas time. I have no Christmas at my big house, and no little girl. Won't you let me come to her party?"

Beulah capitulated. "I can't refuse," she

said, and then the spirit of holiday beckoned her too. "If you only knew what this will mean to her!" she exclaimed. "Already one kind friend has bought her a tree and the ornaments to dress it." She pointed to the various packages on the table.

"That's right! that's right!" cried Mrs. Hennaberry. "You have the tree; then let me add the refreshments." She pressed her purse into Beulah's hand, saying, "I don't know where the cake and ice-cream shops are, so you must go for me. And I want lots and lots of everything."

At this announcement Micky and Blanche gave expression to their feelings in a series of Comanche war whoops, while Beulah all smiles at last cried, "Oh! it does seem like a fairy tale, it really does!" And she hurried into the bedroom to find a basket to take shopping with her.

But there was another shock in store for Mrs. Hennaberry. At that moment there was a tremendous bumping and banging in the hall; the door was pushed open by a heavy, masculine foot, and a man appeared in the doorway, tugging away at a huge hemlock tree, which was doing its best to get away and roll down-stairs again.

Mrs. Hennaberry watched his efforts for a

moment in silence; then she tried to give him some directions as to a better way of managing the job, but the doctor was making so much noise himself that he heard and saw nothing until he had landed the tree in the middle of the room, and after dusting one hand against the other, got out his handkerchief and mopped his perspiring brow.

"Well I got it up," he exclaimed, "but it was a tussle, I can tell you!"

Where had she heard that voice before? Then the man turned around and she recognized Dr. Marshall.

Amazement and rage filled the breast of Mrs. Hennaberry; she felt that something unlawful was being perpetrated against her, but she could not surmise what it was. However, she was sure that Providence had led her to the place, and advancing on the doctor, she shook an accusing finger at him, and demanded in acid tones, "Stewart Marshall, what are you doing here?"

As for the doctor, when he saw who was advancing upon him, he behaved in a manner shameful to relate of a grown man; his knees fairly shook under him, and he turned whiter than his handkerchief.

"I — I — I am just leaving," he managed to

gasp and, rushing out the door and down the stairs two at a time, he had vanished up the street in less time than it takes to tell it, while Mrs. Hennaberry sank into a chair and tried to collect her scattered wits.

Then Beulah came back from the bedroom; she saw the tree lying in the middle of the room, but no Dr. Marshall.

"Where is the doctor?" she asked.

The children told her that he had gone.

"Gone!" exclaimed Beulah, and she hurried out into the hall and called him, but no one replied.

"Why! he mustn't run away from the party!" she cried, and ran down-stairs as quickly as she could. But by the time she reached the street, the doctor's coat tails were just disappearing round the corner; so she gave up the chase, and contented herself by going into the nearest drug store to call up the hospital on Hester Street and leave a message that they were having a "regular" party in Jackson Street, and that he was specially invited to return.

Meanwhile Mrs. Hennaberry sat in frozen amazement, and tried to piece out the mystery,

which seemed to grow only the more puzzling as time went on.

"Dr. Marshall! Is he too in the siren's clutches? Is he *the* man?" she asked herself.

A wave of anger swept over her. "And me! I came here to give that woman a piece of my mind—and now instead of that, she's out there spending my money, and I haven't got five cents to pay my carfare home!"

"Ingeborg," she said, facing her maid with the air of one who makes an important discovery, "I'm a regular fool!"

And Ingeborg, as was her accustomed habit, agreed heartily, "Yes, madame."

CHAPTER XII

MANY INVADERS STORM THE CASTLE

BUT having achieved a retaliation for which she had waited years, Ingeborg thought it wise to divert Mrs. Hennaberry's attention while her laurels were still intact. "I hear someone at the door," she said.

"Go and open it," ordered Mrs. Hennaberry. Ingeborg went quietly and did so.

A surprising sight met their eyes; Frau Bunde-felder was stooping over in the doorway, her hand shading one ear, which was placed at the spot where the key-hole had been located a moment previously. She gradually became aware that something had happened, and turning her head, perceived that no key-hole was where key-hole should have been.

However, her presence of mind did not desert her. She realized that an opportunity had presented itself of gratifying her particular pet sin — curiosity as to what her neighbors were doing — and she determined to seize it. Assuming

her blandest smile, she advanced into the room and bobbed a courtesy to Mrs. Hennaberry, who was still sitting before the fire trying to get her breath.

"If der gracious lady pairmeets," she began.

Mrs. Hennaberry looked up and saw her. "It seems that I do," she interjected ironically.

Frau Bundefelder hastened to make her position clear. "I nefer makes no interests in vat don't concern me," she said. "I minds mine own business, ja! I keeps mineself to mineself." She looked around at the tree and at the packages, every one of which filled her with a vivid desire to know what was inside, and waited a moment to give Mrs. Hennaberry a chance to enlighten her. But the old lady was engulfed in her own whirl of thoughts, and after one glance did not pay much attention to the intruder.

"If I don't make no mistakes der vas somedings said of a pardy," ventured Frau Bundefelder, with an ingratiating smile.

"Why yes, there is going to be a party," replied Mrs. Hennaberry absently, "but it's going to be a very small one."

Frau Bundefelder could not make up her mind whether this was intended as a rebuff or not,

however she was tempted to make one more advance. "Ja! ja! dot's right!" she said and then added tentatively, "Not dot I vould expect an invitings." As this met with no response she hastened to go on. "Nein! nein! dot vould be asking too much."

"Der gracious lady understands dot I can haf mine own pardies," was her next contribution to the conversation, and though it was spoken with becoming modesty, she intended to convey the fact that she too had dwelt in the Elysium of fashionable life.

"Each T'ursday I make Kaffee-klasch mit nine oder ladies."

Here Ingeborg, who had been regarding the German woman with a superiority that can only be acquired in service with the best families, gave a contemptuous sniff that made Frau Bundesfelder's blood boil. However, she ignored the interruption and went on, "Each year I go to Schuetzenfest."

Again Ingeborg sniffed, and she could no longer stand it; marching up to the Swede, she planted her hands on her hips and hurled at her, "So'ae aufgeblasne Gans!" Which caused Ingeborg to subside once for all.

"Der first Sunday of each month," continued the voluble Frau Bundefelder, crossing to Mrs. Hennaberry; but that august lady waved her away with, "Yes, yes; you'll have to tell me some other time."

"Vell, I vas yoost saying," Frau Bundefelder tried to articulate; but Mrs. Hennaberry pointed to the busy room, which was fast becoming littered with tinsel and toys, as the children had begun to untie the bundles.

"Don't you see how hard I'm working?" she demanded, though her work must have come under the head of mental labor, as she was sitting quite still in the rocking chair with her hands folded before her.

This time the rebuff was so decided that Frau Bundefelder judged that all further parleying would be useless; she therefore made ready to depart.

"Ja! ja! I'm going," she said, moving toward the door. "I yoost com in — I yoost com in."

But Mrs. Hennaberry halted her. The preparations for the party that were going on around her, were gradually absorbing her attention, and the doctor and his misdeeds slipped from her

mind. She now looked at Frau Bundefelder for the first time.

"Wait!" she said, "You seem to be a respectable sort of woman. You may stay to the party if you like."

Frau Bundefelder's face fairly beamed with delight. "A pardy!—mit moosic! You make me an invitings?" she cried rapturously.

"Yes," nodded Mrs. Hennaberry.

"Ja! ja! dot's right! Moosic unt dancings, dot does der peoples goot. You shall see; I haf a leg unter me still." And to prove it, she executed a few steps of a ländler with surprising agility. "Ha! ha! ha!" she laughed, as she stopped flushed with the exertion. "Not so young yet, but all goot stuff."

"Sit down," commanded Mrs. Hennaberry, who thought that those who came to the party should do a share of the work.

"Like dis?" asked Frau Bundefelder, looking down at her neat print dress, and with visions of a resplendent silk garment, a relic of better days, which was lying wrapped in tissue paper in her cedar chest. "Nein! nein! pardies must have pardy dressings. I vill mineself make ready." And she departed to scatter heart-

bleedings among the neighbors in the knowledge of what they were missing, and to array herself for the merrymaking.

By this time the children had the toys unpacked, and the little room was a pandemonium. Micky had seized upon a drum and was marching up and down, thumping on it with might and main, while Blanche had selected a small tenor cornet upon which to try her powers. At present she was purple in the face from her efforts to produce a tune, and the only result was a series of ear-piercing shrieks from the agonized instrument.

"Oh, godmother! here are a whole box of jewels of rare device," cried Dulcie, running up with a handful of glittering ornaments to display. "What shall we do with them?"

"You can't do anything until you set up the tree," decided Mrs. Hennaberry, and seeing that nothing would be accomplished unless she took the job in hand, she rose and proceeded to do so.

Her first move was to separate the O'Donovan children from their instruments of torture. "Come, Michael Dennis, take hold of that side of the tree, and, Ingeborg, you take the other."

Ingeborg protested indignantly.

"Do as I tell you," said Mrs. Hennaberry,

Again the door opened to admit Abraham followed by Mr. Hennaberry, who had wrapped his long muffler high about his face by way of concealing his identity, and who was carefully carrying the box of toy soldiers under his arm.

"Come along, Mr. Hennaberry. It's all right; there's nobody here," sounded the genial voice of Abraham. But just at that moment Ingeborg, unceremoniously pushing by her mistress, rushed from behind the tree.

"Villain! monster!" she yelled. "I will have a revenge! I will make breeches of promise on you!"

Abraham nearly jumped out of his boots, for with her features distorted by crying, her hat on one side, and with flying arms, Ingeborg presented a really terrifying figure.

With a gasp of "Ingeborg!! oh! my laws!" Abraham backed out of the room, nearly knocking his master over as he did so, and ran down-stairs as fast as his legs would carry him.

But Ingeborg was not to be evaded so easily. Her sturdy Swedish legs had tramped themselves into training over many a weary mile of mountain road, and treating Mr. Hennaberry with no more ceremony than she had used toward his wife, she

pushed him out of the way, and gave chase, screaming as she went.

As for Mrs. Hennaberry, all the combined rages that she had ever enjoyed during her life, were as nothing to what she felt when she beheld Jacob Hennaberry, package in hand, standing in the middle of the room. Like a charge of dynamite, she drew herself together and burst upon the unfortunate old gentleman; advancing from behind the tree, she shook an infuriated forefinger at him and thundered, "Oh! you bad old man!"

Poor Mr. Hennaberry was just recovering from the surprise that he felt on seeing Ingeborg appear out of nowhere, when that dreaded voice fell upon his ear. With a violent start, he turned and beheld Mrs. Hennaberry bearing down upon him like a man o' war.

In a faint voice he murmured deprecatingly, "Now, Henrietta," and backed away.

But Mrs. Hennaberry was upon him. "How dare you look me in the face!" she cried. "I've found you out at last. What have you to say in your own defense?" Mr. Hennaberry tried to speak, but she cut him short, "Don't speak to me. Don't utter a word. Don't make the matter

worse by your deceit. I've caught you red-handed!" And as Mr. Hennaberry had by this time backed as far as he could, he wilted down into a chair and looked as guilty as possible.

"But *you* are here," he extenuated.

"Yes, and it's a good thing I am here," retorted his wife. "If it wasn't for me, I don't know what you would do anyway." Then her eye lighting upon the box, she pointed to it sternly and asked, "What is it you have in the package?"

Mr. Hennaberry turned even paler than before. "Now, my dear," he pleaded, but the relentless voice went on, "Don't beat about the bush. Open it. Jacob! Open it, *I say!*"

With trembling fingers, the old man untied the string and removed the paper wrapping, while Mrs. Hennaberry adjusted her glasses.

"Eh? What is it? Toys!" she exclaimed, pushing aside the lid, and turning over the contents of the box with one finger. Suddenly her voice faltered. "Why, Jacob! they are Frank's!" Her eyes filled up and her mouth twitched. "You stole them from my closet — and to give them to — to —"

She stopped unsteadily, for the line of reasoning that she had been following led her nowhere, and

left her lost in a maze of conflicting emotions. She turned to her husband, and the light that she saw reflected in his face was too blinding a joy to be quickly comprehended.

"Oh ! Jacob !" she said softly, "You don't mean that beautiful little creature is our — is my son's own — is my grandchild ?"

He could only nod, and she stand for a moment trying to take it in.

"Jacob," said Mrs. Hennaberry weakly, "Get up and let me sit down quick !" And she sank into the chair which Mr. Hennaberry hastily vacated for her.

"Shall I get you a glass of water ?" cried Mr. Hennaberry in alarm, for Mrs. Hennaberry was panting for breath, and quite scarlet in the face from emotion.

"No — no," signed Mrs. Hennaberry. "I'll be all right in a moment. Whew ! whew !"

She loosened her bonnet-strings and wiped the perspiration from behind her ears. "I've always heard that the first sensations of a grandmother exceed any of the passions, sacred or profane," she exclaimed.

A thousand contradictory emotions tore her. "That blessed child belongs to me !" She chuck-

led. "Why! I knew it, Jacob, I knew it the very first instant I set eyes upon her."

"Only I was such a fool that I didn't know it," truth compelled her to add.

Then a new thought stemmed the torrent of tenderness, and revived all the old anger in her heart. "And the mother, instead of being what I thought, is — why, she is — she is *that* woman! She took my son away from me! Do you think that I am ever going to forgive her? Her!!"

"Now, Henrietta, my dear," began Mr. Hennaberry, stretching out his hands entreatingly. Memories of all the misery that Henrietta's hasty tongue had brought upon them rose up before him, and he saw the past about to repeat itself again.

"Listen to me just once," he urged, but Mrs. Hennaberry turned upon him majestically. "Be silent, Jacob Hennaberry! Have you ever known me to change my mind? Has anyone ever been able to move me one iota, once my mind was made up? You have deceived me, you and that wretched Abraham — and that woman — and she's out there now spending my money!" The last thought was too much for Mrs. Hennaberry, and almost too angry to express herself, she

sputtered, "Jacob Hennaberry, do you know what I am going to do? I'm going to raise the devil! I'll never forgive — I'll never forgive —"

But just then the door of the bedroom opened; there was a burst of childish laughter from within, and Dulcie, running out to them, cried, "Oh! fairy godmother! come and look at the jewels. Oh! they are beautiful!" and caught Mrs. Hennaberry by the hand.

Mrs. Hennaberry stood transfixed; the hard words died away on her lips. She tried to force them out, but against her will, her features relaxed in a delighted smile. She had two natures struggling within her, and the naughty one had been given free rein for so long that she hardly knew how to behave when the better one took the upper hand — and besides she was ashamed to back down before Jacob Hennaberry.

"Come along, godmother! Hurry! hurry!" cried Dulcie, tugging at her hand with the imperious haste of childhood, and suddenly Mrs. Hennaberry found herself saying, "Yes, dearie" quite naturally, and meekly followed her grandchild from the room.

Jacob Hennaberry, left alone, sank down in the arm chair and uttered a fervent "Thank God!"

CHAPTER XIII

WE GO TO A PARTY

WHEN Beulah came back again, laden with nobby bags and odd-looking bundles, she was astonished to find a quaint little old gentleman sitting alone by the window in the empty room.

"I beg your pardon — my little girl —" were her first words as she glanced hastily about.

Just then a burst of gay laughter from the bedroom told her where the children were to be found. Apologetically she turned back to the old gentleman.

"My wife," he said, pointing in explanation toward the bedroom.

"I see," said Beulah, and then she began to laugh. "May I ask your name? You see I've only been able to think of your wife as Mrs. Christmas Angel." She paused but there was no answer. "Your name is?" she repeated.

A terrible predicament faced Mr. Hennaberry, and he had never been a man to meet emergencies.

If he should tell her who the people were who had invaded her little home, what would be the consequences? The temper of his daughter-in-law was an unknown quantity, and he knew that a word was enough to start Henrietta on the war-path. Finally he took refuge as usual in vacillation and replied, "Just Mr. Christmas Angel, ma'am, just Mr. Christmas Angel."

But Beulah was not to be put off. She thought it quite time that she had more definite information about these strangers who suddenly seemed to have become part of the family. However, the day was saved again for Mr. Hennaberry by a sharp knock at the door.

"Come in," called Beulah, and the door opened to admit the ample form of Mrs. O'Donovan. She was rolling up the sleeves of her blowsy gingham dress, and in her eye shone the red light of war.

The fact of the matter was that Frau Bunde-felder, upon whose shoulder the dove of peace was wont to perch, had this time succeeded in raising havoc along the entire floor. When she had issued from her interview, and had given a pleasingly free version of the warmly pressed invitation she had received to attend the party, she retired to perform

the ceremony of getting dressed, leaving two humiliated and resentful females in the hall. Italy and Ireland immediately signed a truce in the persons of Mrs. O'Donovan and Signora Vanni, who promptly put their heads together to decide what was to be done to show their disapproval of the entire proceedings.

Investigation via the key-hole, now left vacant by Frau Bundefelder, threw little light on the subject, as the door was set at an aggravatingly obscure angle; but presently Elvira Vanni who had managed to get a peek into the bedroom by a perilous feat of acrobatics on the fire-escape, appeared breathless to announce that Micky and Blanche were in the bedroom "sticking gold things in the fat lady's head."

Wrath overcame Mrs. O'Donovan. "Th' impidence o'thim childer, demeanin thimselves in a place that's too good for their mother. I'll slap the life out o'thim," she cried and started for the door.

As she reached the landing, she saw Beulah just entering her flat, and the sight somewhat damped her ardor, for she knew that Beulah had a quiet chilliness of manner when attacked, against which it was almost impossible to battle. But a

sibilant sneer behind her of "Scare, eh?" spurred her on and into the room.

Once on the field of battle, her wary eye hastily took muster of the forces arrayed against her, and immediately selected Mr. Hennaberry as the weakest spot in the defense.

"I've come for young Michael Dennis and me Blawnche," she announced with a belligerent eye fixed on Mr. Hennaberry. "'Tis entirely too dark fer thim t'be traypesin th' neighborhood — an' kidnapers about." The tone in which the last words were uttered caused Mr. Hennaberry to shrivel up in his chair, and wish devoutly that Henrietta were there to meet the situation.

"But there's to be a party," answered Beulah.

"They'll go to no parties widout a chapperony," replied Mrs. O'Donovan firmly.

Then Beulah understood where the trouble lay. "Do let them come," she begged. "I was just going to run over and ask you if you wouldn't come yourself."

Mrs. O'Donovan's face gradually melted until it was wreathed in smiles; she advanced on Beulah and infolded her in a motherly embrace. "Is it come, darlin'!" she cried. "Well bless yer dear heart! Just wait till I get on me new waist an' me

the breathless butler after chasing him for several blocks, and mutual explanations had followed which had entirely restored the amicable relations hitherto existing between them. They now entered chatting pleasantly together.

"Oh! there you are, Ingeborg," said Mrs. Hennaberry as she caught sight of her. "As long as you are not doing anything, you can just help me trim this tree. The large ornaments go on the lower branches, the small ones on the top."

"Come and help me, Abraham?" whispered Ingeborg coyly, but Mrs. Hennaberry overheard her.

"No, he won't," she answered, and pushed her behind the tree.

Just then Beulah returned from the bedroom, where she had gone to lay aside her hat and coat, and was surprised to find that Abraham had joined them.

"Why! Abraham! when did you come?" she cried. "This is Abraham; he has been in my husband's family for over twenty-five years," she explained to Mrs. Hennaberry.

Mrs. Hennaberry put on her glasses and quizzically surveyed the butler from head to foot.

"So that is Abraham, is it?" she commented, while Abraham hung down his guilty head to hide a sheepish grin. "Well, Abraham, you get up on that sewing machine, and just tie the holly over that window." Which Abraham hastened to do, and for five minutes Mrs. Hennaberry had him changing it backward and forward, lower and higher, now to the right, then to the left, until something else came to claim her attention and she forgot all about it.

Next, one of the baskets of goodies caught her eye. "Eh! what have we got here?" she exclaimed, taking out one of the bags and shaking it to see what kind of a noise it would make. "Nuts?" She glanced around in search of someone out of work. "Ah, Jacob," she called, as she spied him sitting back of the stove, where he had retired to escape the confusion, "As long as you are not doing anything, you can just shell these nuts. It will be something nice for you to amuse yourself with." And long-suffering Jacob sighed as he began his task.

"Here, Dulcie, you can untie these ribbons," continued Mrs. Hennaberry, holding out a box fastened with gay streamers. "And what is this?" she went on, as she delved deeper into the

contents of the basket. "Fruit?" She called Blanche to her. "Pile this fruit prettily on a plate — and mind you don't eat any."

Then she folded her hands and gazed complacently around the busy room. "We are getting along famously," she smiled. Then one idler drew her attention; Micky had found a picture-puzzle and was sitting on the floor, trying to piece it together. This state of lazy amusement did not at all coincide with Mrs. Hennaberry's notion of what should be, and she promptly looked about to find something useful for him to do. "What a lot of string and paper people do put about their bundles," she exclaimed. "Micky, as long as you are not doing anything —"

But Micky the Scout never let her get any farther. "Yes, I know," he said disgustedly, "It'll be sompin' nice fer me t'amuse meself wid. Well you just *can* dat stuff — can it. I ain't doin' nuttin', an' I don' want t'do nuttin'; I'm enjoying meself."

Mrs. Hennaberry tried to draw herself up to overwhelm the impudent little urchin; but somehow her sense of humor got the better of her, and she had to turn away to suppress a chuckle.

Suddenly the door opened, and Mrs. O'Donovan, disheveled and breathless, rushed in. She had donned a brilliant plaid silk waist which she was struggling to button with one hand, while the other tried to settle the "poofs" more securely in their resting-place.

"Mrs. Randolph, can I spake a word wid ye?" she asked; and Beulah left the Christmas tree where she was trying to attach a little battery with electric candles which the extravagant doctor had bought, and hurried to find out what was the matter. "What is it?" she asked.

Now Mrs. O'Donovan had the softest heart in the world, and when she had entered the Vanni apartment, dressed in her glory, to request a neighborly hand to assist in buttoning her up, a truly pathetic spectacle had met her eyes. Elvira was stretched at full length on the floor, her heels kicking in the air, while in a lusty roar she refused all offers of consolation from her distracted parents, who were on their knees beside her pouring out a stream of fluent Italian and gesticulating wildly. Mrs. O'Donovan's warm Celtic sympathies melted, and with a "Niver ye mind it; I'll fix it fer ye," she rushed over to Mrs. Randolph's.

"It's th' dagos at th' back," she explained, in answer to Mrs. Randolph's question. "Ye've got their Eyetalian blood in an awful uproar, t' think they're th' only fambly on th' floor that's lift out."

"What is it — what's the matter?" demanded Mrs. Hennaberry, leaving her other tasks to see what the new interruption meant.

"It's Signor Vanni and his wife," explained Beulah. "He keeps a little watch store on the corner. They have a little girl, and they are training her for the ballet."

"Wot! Ast dat guinea kid!" shouted Micky from his corner. "Ah! cut it out. She's too dead stuck on herself."

"We don' want ter socherate wid her," chimed in Blanche.

"Be quiet!" cried Mrs. Hennaberry, shaking her finger at the children, and turning to Mrs. O'Donovan, she said graciously, "Certainly; let's have them in by all means."

Mrs. O'Donovan hurried off with the good news, but presently returned to ask, "Shall I tell old Vanni t' bring his accordjun?"

"What?" asked Mrs. Hennaberry.

"You know," replied Mrs. O'Donovan, with an

expressive pantomime of one performing on that gymnastic instrument.

"Let them bring it," assented Mrs. Hennaberry, and with a "Right fer ye, darlin'," Mrs. O'Donovan disappeared again.

When she turned, Mrs. Hennaberry found Dulcie standing with clasped hands, in speechless delight before the tree, which under the efforts of Beulah assisted by Abraham and Ingeborg, was blossoming into a thing of fairyland. In fact the entire room had been transformed; the table was spread with a snowy cloth, and fairly groaned under its load of candy, cake, and all sorts of goodies; Abraham had festooned the window and the walls with holly, and in the midst of it all glistened the stately Christmas tree.

"Do you like it, Dulcie?" asked Mrs. Hennaberry.

"Oh! lots and lots!" cried Dulcie. "It is all a fairy story come alive." Her little face shone with a rapture that was almost unearthly, and that made something akin to fear steal over Mrs. Hennaberry.

"She looks pale. Do you think this is good for her?" she asked Beulah. The two women stood together for a moment watching the child.

"I'm afraid I oughtn't to have consented," Beulah sighed. "But she is having such a good time; it would break her little heart if I were to end it now. And then it would spoil the fun for all the others. I can't do that, can I?" And looking around at the happy room, Mrs. Henna-berry had to agree that it would have taken a stony heart to do so.

The first guest to arrive was Frau Bundefeller, who came in panting with anxiety lest she should be missing something. The silk dress of ancient glory had been donned, and a real lace handkerchief was artlessly displayed at the waist by means of a large-sized safety pin. She had rolled her hair in a high pompadour on the top of her head, and crowning the edifice was a pompon, that had done service at a German-American charity ball, which swayed to and fro with every bob and courtesy. As a finishing touch, she grasped tightly in her hand the famous fan, whose gaudy legend "Souvenir of Coney Island" still whispered to her of that far-off day when she and Heinrich had met and plighted troth.

"Goot-evening! goot-evening!" she cried heartily, smiling and bobbing as she entered. "It's all right. I'm here now. Der pardy begins, ja?"

"Yes," replied Mrs. Hennaberry, appointing herself a reception committee of one. "The party is going to begin."

"Is that your best dress?" she asked, as Frau Bundefelder, with sundry shakes and pulls, tried to display her costume to the best advantage.

"Ja! Silk mit bugglings," replied Frau Bundefelder, holding up for examination a strand of the jet beads with which the gown was plentifully bestrewed.

"It's very pretty," commented Mrs. Hennaberry politely, after a careful examination through her glasses. But the good frau knew how to show a becoming modesty.

"Nein! nein! yoost plain," she said deprecatingly. "Two dollars and fifty cents a yard at Goldenberg's." There was a pause. "A yard," she repeated in order that this point might sink home, and then wound up demurely, "But yoost plain." There was nothing "pniffen" about Frau Bundefelder, and she meant to establish the fact.

"Yes, yes! Go right over there and sit down by the stove," commanded Mrs. Hennaberry, who was too busy arranging the details of the party in her mind to give any more time to Frau

Bundefelder, and she pushed her toward the place that she had mentally allotted to her.

"Dankeschoen ! dankeschoen !" cried Frau Bundefelder, courtesying, and just then she caught sight of Mr. Hennaberry sitting behind the stove. "Who is der chentlemans ?" she asked inquisitively.

"That is my husband," replied Mrs. Hennaberry, who by this time was on her way to the Christmas tree to tell the decorators how they ought to have done their work.

"Der gracious lady's husband !" cried Frau Bundefelder, and then she sighed coquettishly and twisted her fan. "Mein Gott !" she exclaimed, "Now vy couldn't I get a fine mans like hims ?"

At that moment her eye fell on Abraham, who had left the tree, and was arranging the things on the refreshment table. Assuming her most bland expression, she began sidling across the room in his direction ; but she reckoned without Ingeborg, for that damsel, whose jealous eye was always alert, rushed from behind the tree, and grasped Abraham by the arm.

"I need you with the tree," she said authoritatively, and dragged the butler away with her.

"All right — all right — I don't vant him —

take him," cried Frau Bundefeller; and she sat down in the rocking chair before the stove saying, "Let's keep everydings pleasant."

The next to arrive was Mrs. O'Donovan, who had only waited to give a hasty finish to her toilet, after having stanchd the bleeding hearts of the Vanni family with the glad news that they might come to the party.

"It's all right, darlin'," she called to Mrs. Hennaberry as she entered, "They're comin' right over. They're hookin' th' young one into th' clothes she wears at th' dancin' school, an' old Vanni's goin' t' bring his accordjun."

Mrs. Hennaberry eyed her with a look that was intended to check any further attempts at familiarity. "Very well, Mrs. — what's you name?" she asked with dignity.

"O'Donovan, ma'am," replied the other quite unabashed. "Of *the* O'Donovans of County Donovan. We're th' discindints of kings, but if ye like, dear, ye can just call me Daylia." And she laid her hand confidentially on Mrs. Hennaberry's arm, just to show that there was no hard feeling.

But Mrs. Hennaberry was not going to have

anything like that; and just how it happened Mrs. O'Donovan never knew, but suddenly the hand was off the shoulder, she had been gently but firmly propelled into the arm-chair by the window, and enough unstemmed raisins entrusted to her care to keep her happy for quite a long time.

"Jacob, it looks as if this were going to turn into an East Side anarchist meeting," whispered Mrs. Hennaberry to her husband, as a sound of shrilly pitched voices sounded louder and louder in the hall.

"Here come de dagos," yelled Micky.

"We don' want de guineakid," screamed Blanche, and Mrs. O'Donovan had to take both of them by the scruff of the neck and shake the noise out of them. "Howld yer racket, Blawnche! Micky, not a word out o'ye!" she commanded, as she "sat" them on the floor and stood with upraised hand, ready to execute justice upon the first offender.

Meantime a motley group were standing in the doorway. Signor Vanni had oiled his hair, and donned his Sunday clothes in honor of the occasion; — a brown velvet jacket which was carelessly thrown back to display a blue shirt, a red necktie, and a flowered waistcoat, against which was sus-

pended a watch-chain not much thicker than a cable, produced an effect which he felt might not unappropriately be called striking. His wife had gotten herself up for the affair in a sort of comic opera costume which had been evolved by adding a number of gay, Italian handkerchiefs to her usual Grand Street red satin waist and black silk skirt; and by the hand she led what both the fond parents looked upon as the culminating flower of the race of Vanni. Elvira was attired in a diminutive pink tarlatan ballet costume that was the envy of the Academy, and the very sight of which woke the worst passions sleeping in the breasts of the O'Donovans.

It is regrettable to relate that it was Elvira who spoiled the fine effect which this concerted entrance had made, by immediately sticking out her tongue at the O'Donovan children, who responded by a yell that was quickly silenced by the threatening hand of Mrs. O'Donovan.

"Come in, come in," called Mrs. Hennaberry, who was beginning to feel quite at home in her rôle of hostess, and indeed had forgotten for the time that she did not own the flat.

"I understand that your name is Vanni," she remarked as she looked them over.

"Si, signora, si, signora," responded Signor Vanni, smiling and rubbing his hands together genially.

"Must be a nickname," continued Mrs. Hennaberry. "Giovanni — that's what it ought to be."

"Non, non, signora; Vanni name — Vanni," replied Signor Vanni, eager to explain.

"Yes, yes; I know what it is," retorted Mrs. Hennaberry impatiently, "and I am telling you what it ought to be — Giovanni."

Signora Vanni shrugged her shoulders irritably. "Let me tell her," she whispered in her husband's ear; and advancing to Mrs. Hennaberry, she shouted as if to drive in the information by main force, "Italiano name, signora, non Americano. Vanni — Vanni — Vanni!" And as Mrs. Hennaberry, half deafened, said no more, she lowered her voice and changed the subject. "This is my littl' girl," she said with becoming pride. "She com' for a danza."

Elvira spread her skirts and made a professional courtesy. "My name is Elvira Giulia Vanni," she announced with importance. "I learn to dance at the Academy. Some day I will dance in the ballet or in vaudeville."

"Shall I show you what I can do?" she added,

in a fever to display her latest accomplishments before the O'Donovan children.

"Certainly, my dear, if you will," replied Mrs. Hennaberry, repressing a strong impulse to shake some of the affected airs out of the future ballerina. Whereupon Elvira rose upon her toes and executed an elaborate pirouette amid the delighted exclamations of the company.

"Vaudyvill! vaudyvill! Yah! de movies fer yours! you can't dance!" shouted Micky, while Blanche echoed a shrill "Yah!"

Elvira came down off her toes and made a rush at the O'Donovan children, stamping her feet and screaming, and it was only by the combined efforts of the respective mothers who dragged the combatants apart, that peace was restored.

"Will ye be quiet now, Michael Dennis?" demanded his mother, as she "sat" him down hard on the floor, and administered a sound cuff on the ear, while Signora Vanni wiped away Elvira's tears, and besought her to behave.

"He ver' bada boy, signora, ver' bada boy," complained the voluble Signor Vanni to Mrs. Hennaberry, who paid no attention to him.

"Be quiet at once! Silence all of you!" she cried, and looked so formidable that a hush gradu-

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ally stole over the room. The fact is that Henrietta was used to being the center of any quarrels that might be taking place in her neighborhood, and she resented any incursion upon her rights.

"Der pardy begins now, ja?" expectantly inquired Frau Bundefelder, breaking the pause that followed.

"Yes, the party is going to begin," said Mrs. Hennaberry, as if she would like to see anyone try to stop its proceeding.

"Vell, let's keep everydings pleasant," begged Frau Bundefelder.

Mrs. Hennaberry looked about to discover some place to deposit the newcomers. "Mr. Vanni, you and your wife sit over there on the little sofa in the corner; and you will have to sit on the floor, little Julia Amelia — whatever you name is; we haven't got chairs for the children."

But Elvira smoothed her dainty gauzes loftily. "I will stand. I must not spoil my skirt," she said.

"Sit down, you look like an animated lamp shade," said Mrs. Hennaberry, and taking the affected Elvira by the shoulders, she "sat" her gently but firmly on the floor.

Just then something wonderful happened, a rosy

glow seemed to flood the room, and everyone clapped hands and cried out in delight.

"Fairy godmother, look! look!" cried Dulcie. "They are lighting up the tree!" And true enough, Abraham had connected the little battery, and now the tree was sparkling with tiny lights, red, blue, and yellow, from top to bottom.

"Gott im Himmel! yoost like der Vaterland!" exclaimed Frau Bundefelder, the tears standing in her eyes, as she ecstatically rocked herself backward and forward.

"Godmother, do you think an angel, a really, truly angel with wings and a silver star will come to-night?" asked Dulcie wistfully. A sudden dark thought passed between Beulah and the merrymakers as she listened to the innocent words; she put her arms around Dulcie and drew her close, and then pulling up a chair, she made her sit on her lap, so that she was a part of all the fun and yet away from it.

"Hooray fer Christmas! hooray! hooray!" screamed Micky and Blanche, their natural instincts seizing upon this opportunity to burst into vocal expression.

"Viva! viva!" squeaked Elvira, not to be outdone.

"We must have a throne," she said, beginning to rearrange the entire room in her mind.

"Ah! Mr. and Mrs. Vanni, you'll have to get right off the sofa; we need it," she directed, motioning the Italian family, who had just comfortably disposed themselves, to move. "Ingeborg and Abraham can fetch you that trunk from over there, and you will find that it will do very nicely," she added, as the Vannis seemed inclined to dispute the matter.

"Micky, you and Blanche must come and move the throne," she called, and looking about for the best place to establish the court, she decided on the spot at present occupied by Germany.

"Take your chair, and sit over there with Daylia," she ordered Frau Bundefelder.

"But, lieber frau, you yoost told me I should sit right here," objected the good frau, whose Teutonic brain did not work fast enough to keep pace with Mrs. Hennaberry's activities.

"Never mind what I told you. Sit over there," said Mrs. Hennaberry taking her by the arm to hasten her movements, and with a pitiful, protesting "Gott im Himmel! Vat a vomans!" Frau Bundefelder retired into the shadow of Mrs. O'Donovan's capacious figure.

Meantime Micky and Blanche were struggling with the sofa. "Put yer back to't, Blawnche," urged her brother, "Y'ain't liftin' no charlotte russey."

"Well, Micky, I ain't Sandow," panted Blanche, tugging away with might and main, and at last they had the throne erected on the hearthrug before the fire.

"Now, Jacob, escort the princess to the throne," engineered Mrs. Hennaberry; and amid the plaudits of the multitude, Mr. Hennaberry led Princess Dulcie to the sofa, and bowing low, established her there.

"Now salute the queen. Long live the queen!" signalled Mrs. Hennaberry; and the roof-tree rang with the heartiness of the salutation. In fact Micky and Blanche were so delighted with the opportunity to work off a little surplus energy that they continued to stamp and shout until Mrs. Hennaberry cried, "Stop! That's enough saluting. Sit down!" and the strong hand of Mrs. O'Donovan extinguished them.

"Now, your majesty," here Mrs. Hennaberry advanced to the foot of the throne, "Is it your pleasure that we, your subjects, should entertain you for a space?"

"Yes ! yes !" cried Dulcie, clapping her hands with excitement ; her eyes were shining, and a spot of bright color glowed in either cheek. Beulah had placed a couple of cushions for her to lean against, and her arm formed a support for the little figure which seemed even more delicate and ethereal in the midst of all the hubbub.

Mrs. Hennaberry waved her hand majestically. "Then — music !" she cried ; and at the signal, a blast from Signor Vanni's accordion smote the air.

"The first thing upon the program will be — what's your name?" Mrs. Hennaberry interrupted herself to ask Elvira in a stage whisper.

"Elvira Giulia Vanni," replied both the proud parents, jumping up off the trunk to get as much of the lime-light for themselves as possible. But Mrs. Hennaberry waved them back. "Sit down," she said ; and leading Elvira to the center of the room, she announced, "Signorina Elvira Giulia Vanni will dance for your pleasure."

Signor Vanni struck up a gay waltz, and rising to her toes, Elvira proceeded to treat her audience to the most intricate steps that she had yet mastered at the Academy.

But classic art was wasted on Micky the Scout ;



Signor Vanni struck up a gay waltz. *Page 208.*

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and having several times advised Elvira in a confidential tone to "ginger up," he began to yell "Git de hook ! git de hook !" in which Blanche lustily joined him.

With a squall of rage, the young artiste desisted from her efforts and turned toward her parents. "I will not dance if they make the fun of me," she declared weeping.

"You maka her nairvous," scolded Signora Vanni.

"You bada boy !" shouted Signor Vanni, shaking his fist at the tribe of O'Donovan.

"Will ye be quiet now, Michael Dennis ?" reprimanded his mother.

"I didn't do nuttin'," answered Micky in an injured tone.

"Where are yer manners ?" demanded his mother.

"Well dat ain't dancin' wot she done : dat's physical torture," retorted Micky.

"Oh ! mamma, he make me a name !" wailed Elvira, burying her face in her mother's skirts.

"You bada boy !" reiterated Signor Vanni.

"Do better yourself, you smooch-a-face," shouted Signora Vanni.

But Mrs. O'Donovan rose in defense of her own.

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"Don't ye call my child names," she said threateningly, and turning to Micky she said with racial pride, "Git up, Michael Dennis, an show thim ignerant Eyetalians a thing er two."

Micky rose with a swagger. "All right," he said, pointing to Signor Vanni. "Tell him to hit up de band."

But Signor Vanni would have no alliance with the foe. "Non! non! no play for heem," he said shortly, and tucked his instrument under his arm.

"Niver mind um, darlin'," called Mrs. O'Donovan. "I'll make ye music fer th' glowry of auld Ireland." And she began to sing an Irish jig with gusto, clapping with her hands and stamping with her feet to mark the time.

"Beat dis if yer can, you guinea dancurette," cried Micky, breaking into such an infectious jig that all the room, with the exception of the Italian faction, applauded warmly. But these connoisseurs in the art of the dance shuddered as they beheld every classic law trampled in the dust by the irreverent feet of Micky O'Donovan.

"Atroce! atroce!" groaned Signor Vanni, as he turned away and covered his eyes with his hand to shut out the horrid sight.

"He has never been to an Academy; they would laugh ha! ha!" taunted Elvira, who spoke from experience, as certain bitter memories of the Academy could attest.

"Dese Americani no understanda da Art," sneered Signora Vanni, arms akimbo and with turned-up nose. "Bah! dey are too much vulgare!"

"Ah! go on, ye're jealous," jeered Mrs. O'Donovan. "Keep it up, Micky; 'tis well known auld Ireland's th' country fer th' flirtin' of th' heel an' toe." And just to show that she knew whereof she spoke, she got up and took a few steps herself.

"Italia hassa da Art, Ireland has not gotta da Art," screamed Signora Vanni, doing the best that her girth would allow to execute a pirouette.

"Ireland's got th' dancers," laughed Mrs. O'Donovan, picking up her petticoat and squaring off to Micky in a reel.

"Italia has gotta da best dancers," shouted Signora Vanni, beside herself with irritation.

"Ireland's got th' bist dancers," triumphed Mrs. O'Donovan, cutting a pigeon wing.

Frau Bundefelder, who had been getting more and more excited, could contain herself no longer. "Unt vat about der Deutsch?" she yelled, jump-

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ing up and entering the contest. "Let's keep everydings pleasant ; but vat about der Deutsch ? 'Oh ! der lieber Augustine !'" and she began to hop about wildly.

With that Signora Vanni and Mrs. O'Donovan went for each other, and what would have happened, it is hard to say, had it not been for Mrs. Hennaberry. Throwing herself between the struggling women, she dragged them apart, crying, "Silence ! Be quiet, all of you ! I command you !"

The angry women stood apart, but by their aggressive looks, she saw that there needed but a word to renew the battle ; she felt that something radical must be done at once. "*I am going to dance,*" she said after a moment's pause, and the effect was electrical. A subdued gasp ran around the room, and the combatants returned quietly to their seats.

Mrs. Hennaberry crossed to Mr. Hennaberry and took him by the hand. "Come, we've got to do something. There's going to be a riot here in a minute if there isn't something done immediately," she said in an undertone.

"But, my dear, what are we going to dance ?" asked the amazed Mr. Hennaberry.

"The Varsovienne," replied Mrs. Hennaberry. "I haven't danced it in forty years; but never mind!" And turning to Signor Vanni, she ordered, "Play me the Varsovienne."

"Da vat?" asked Signor Vanni.

"The Varsovienne. Surely you know that, don't you?"

Signor Vanni shook his head. "Non, signora. I ver' sorry."

"You must know it," insisted Mrs. Hennaberry, and she held out her hand and motioned him to give her the accordion. "Give me the thing, and I'll show you," she said, and took the instrument with perfect confidence that she could manage it, although she had never been able to play a note on anything. "How does it work?" she asked, examining it through her glasses.

"Jacob, you take it and show the man how the time goes," she said, trying to force the accordion into Mr. Hennaberry's hand, but he would not accept it. "Here! take it again," she said and thrust it back to Signor Vanni. "Now listen intently and follow me." And she began to hum the air of the quaint old-fashioned dance.

"Ah! Si, signora, si, signora," cried Signor Vanni, his face lighting up, and he straightway

began what he supposed to be an exact imitation of the air that Mrs. Hennaberry had been singing.

"That's it ! that's it !" cried Mrs. Hennaberry, and then in an undertone, she added to Mr. Hennaberry, "It's nothing like it, but they won't know the difference. Come on. Give me your hand."

"But, my dear, I don't remember it," protested Mr. Hennaberry.

"It makes no difference ; they won't know," replied his wife, and together they began to pace the stately measures of the Varsoviennne, accompanied by the rapturous applause of the assemblage.

"Hooray ! hooray ! ain't she a slick old girl !" shouted Micky.

"Jacob," Mrs. Hennaberry whispered, as they danced to and fro, "I feel like a regular fool ! I think we had better stop."

Suddenly, as she turned to make a final courtesy before the throne, she uttered a sharp exclamation, "Look ! look ! the child !"

Dulcie had fallen back against the pillows. Beulah hastily bent over her with a cry "Dulcie !"

and again "Dulcie!" Dulcie raised her head languidly and looked at Beulah.

"Mother," she said, and then the look of recognition faded, her little spirit drifted away, and she sank down at full length on the sofa.

Beulah rushed around the couch, and threw herself on her knees beside it, chafing the little hands. "Oh! it's my fault! all my fault!" she cried between her sobs. "I shouldn't have let them do it. The doctor warned me."

The sympathetic neighbors crowded around, trying to find something helpful to do. "Stand back, all of you," cried Beulah. "What she needs is air. Oh! go, some of you — go quickly — Dr. Marshall — the hospital on Hester Street — tell him it's life and death."

"Run, Abraham!" cried Mr. Hennaberry, and the butler seized his hat and hurried out.

"Dulcie, can't you hear me?" Beulah was bending over the child. The little face remained white and impassive; terror gripped the mother's heart. "She isn't — she isn't — oh! tell me that," she cried imploringly.

"No, no, dear heart; not as bad as that," soothed Mrs. O'Donovan, the tears streaming down her cheeks, as she pushed the damp hair

back from the child's forehead, and applied a cloth that she had soaked in cold water.

Mrs. Hennaberry hesitatingly drew near the sofa. In these few moments she had reaped her punishment for all the selfish, unforgiving years; she realized that there was no place here for her in this hour of grief — she was an outsider. Yet she could not go away.

"Let me see her, please," she said very gently.

"No, no; go away!" cried Beulah.

"Don't turn me away from you," pleaded the old woman. "I must help."

"Haven't you done enough harm here for one evening?" asked Beulah distractedly. "Oh! why did you come here? I didn't ask you to. Please go away."

"Come, Henrietta," begged Mr. Hennaberry, but Mrs. Hennaberry pushed him aside. "No, Jacob," she said, and turned again to Beulah.

"Don't you understand?"

"Henrietta! Jacob!"

At last Beulah understood. A wave of bitter anger swelled up within her, and as she turned on them, she put her arms across Dulcie as if to keep her from their very sight. "No wonder!

no wonder it's happened!" she cried. "This is what you've always brought on me. What did you ever do for your son? I worked for him, I nursed him, — and I loved him. He'd be alive now, if you had helped us — just a little. But you couldn't overlook me. And now it's Dulcie — you think you'll get her too. Well you won't; she's mine — she's my baby. I don't ask you for anything, I don't want anything; this is my house, now you get out of it." She buried her face on the edge of the couch beside Dulcie, sobbing hysterically.

Mrs. Hennaberry had fallen back before the torrent of bitter words; she had heard the truth as she had never heard it spoken in her life before, and the strange part of it all was that she felt, not anger, but only a pain that was almost too sharp for her to bear.

"She's right," she said softly, "I closed my doors against her; she's right to turn me from hers."

"He's here, Mrs. Randolph; I met him coming on the way," cried Abraham, entering hastily, and close behind him followed Dr. Marshall.

"The doctor! Oh! thank God!" cried Beulah,

springing up. "Oh ! tell me, doctor, tell me," she begged, looking at him as if he held in his hands the power to give life or to withhold it.

But the doctor gently put her aside ; he seemed to have laid away his usual self, and his office, his potentiality seemed to cast about him something that set him apart, and moved beside him like a presence in the room.

He kneeled beside the sofa, laid his ear above the child's heart, raised an eyelid to see the eye, lifted one little foot by the heel and put it carefully down again. Beulah tried to pray, but the words would not come.

The doctor rose and lifted the little body lightly and expertly in his arms. "Abraham !" he said shortly.

"Oh ! doctor, tell me, tell me," implored the mother.

"Not now," said the doctor. "We've no time to lose," and passed into the bedroom.

CHAPTER XIV

ABRAHAM REGISTERS A VOW

How the next hour was lived through nobody knew. The room was quickly cleared of the neighbors, the Christmas things were swept into a corner, and in a few minutes the place had taken on the quiet and order of a hospital. Dr. Clark arrived from the hospital, and in an incredibly short time it was all over.

Now was the time that Ingeborg rose to the occasion, and showed the metal of which she was made. The doctor would not allow Beulah to be present, and when Mrs. O'Donovan grew faint at the thought of helping, it was Ingeborg's hands, so deft in all the requirements of her occupation, that were as steady and as tender as any nurse's in the hospital.

But to Ingeborg the dark hour was not entirely unmixed with happiness. Passing through the hall on her way back from Frau Bundefelder's, where she had gone to fetch some linen, she came upon Abraham fairly blubbering upon the stairs.

Really touched, she stopped to pat him on the shoulder and whisper a word of comfort; when to her astonishment, Abraham, who had never until this day yielded an inch in the determined defense of his bachelorhood, put his arms around her and laid his head on her shoulder.

"I'll marry you, Ingeborg," he blurted out. "I said I'd never do it, but I will. If she gets well, I swear by the Lord above who hears me, I'll marry you."

She had no time to hear more, for just then Dr. Clark came out into the hall to see what it was that delayed her; but it seemed to Ingeborg that she walked on some rarer atmosphere than air, and no task was too hard for her happy fingers to perform.

When the work was over and Dr. Clark had gone, Dr. Marshall came out to find Beulah and take her in to Dulcie; but she did not understand and thought that it was something else that he had come to tell her. She became quite unnerved and clung to him hysterically.

"If she goes, don't leave me," she begged. "You are all I have in the world now. I wanted to make you go away; and I can't do it." But as soon as he could make her realize that it was

good news that he was bringing, her reliant self-control came back to her and she insisted on being taken at once to Dulcie. "Oh! I'll behave perfectly," she said, with almost her old laugh. "You see I'm not the regulation womanly woman; I don't remember ever to have given way like that in my life before — I don't know how to do it gracefully."

A reproachful memory of Frank rose up before her, and filled her with remorse at the thought of her momentary unfaithfulness; she determined to appear to have spoken without consciousness of what she was saying, or if that proved impossible, to pass it off as hysteria. And in truth when she was seated by Dulcie's bedside, watching every breath and heart-beat, she did forget all about the doctor and every other man in the world.

Meantime Frau Bundefelder had been despatched to Brooklyn to fetch Mrs. Egner, whose family had given her a course in nursing that should have graduated her from any school with honors. This did a double service; it brought them one whose presence would be a real help, and got rid of another who was more in the way

than anything else: for the good frau was so upset at the thought of her darling charge taken from her care by the doctor, when she was sure that some of the simple, household remedies that she had used for over fifty years would have been far more efficacious, that she completely lost her head; brought towels when she was asked for water, and water when she was asked for soap, until Beulah had the happy idea to send her to Flatbush. So the old lady put on her things all wrong and hurried off, praying as she went, and having taken care to slip her hymn-book in her pocket to read on the way.

At last Abraham found himself alone in the living-room, where so much had happened during the last few hours. Feeling the necessity of doing something physical to relieve his mind, he put on an apron, and taking an old broom, dampened it in order not to raise any dust, and began to tidy the room as quietly as possible. When he had finished that, he mended the fire, and sitting down before it, gave way to bitter reflections.

He, like Beulah, had hasty words of which to repent; and promises that had risen to his lips so spontaneously in a moment of emotion began

to assume a very serious aspect when recollected in cold blood. And it was thus that Mrs. O'Donovan found him when she came from the bedroom with a pile of linen to tear into bandages.

She soon saw that there was something wrong, but having had experience with O'Donovan, knew by the look of him that she had only to be patient to find out all that she wished to know. So she sat down and contentedly rolled her bandages, humming a tune the while.

"It's been a hard time, Mrs. O'Donovan," began Abraham presently.

"Come now, don't ye take on like that," returned Mrs. O'Donovan cheerfully. "Didn't th' doctor say 'twas a foine operation?"

But Abraham only responded by a still more gloomy sigh.

"What's th' matter wid ye?" cried Mrs. O'Donovan at last, unable to contain her curiosity any longer. "Ye've nothin' t'reproach yerself wid. Ye've done yer part an' ye've done it noble — an' fer th' matter o' that, so has Miss Inglebug fer all her Frinch-Eyetalian ways."

The name of Ingeborg caused Abraham to squirm uneasily in his chair; but truth compelled him to admit, "Yes, yes, give the devil his due;

no trained nurse could have showed more nerve than she has this night." And while he made the admission, the utter indefensibility of his position plunged him to the depths of despondency. "It's been a hard night for all of us, Mrs. O'Donovan," he began sententiously, but she cut him short.

"If it's hard fer th' loikes of ye, think of us poor, wake women, the Lord help us!" she remarked.

"Women are more or less accustomed to weak moments," returned Abraham. "But when a man has one, his judgment goes — that's the worst of it, his judgment goes."

"Ye've been doing somethin' imprudent, Mr. Abraham?" ventured the wily woman, knowing that there is nothing like a little sympathy to set the tongue wagging. "Dear! dear! that's too bad!"

Abraham could contain the harrowing secret no longer and groaned out, "Her — her — I've done it."

"Who? What? Inglebug?" demanded Mrs. O'Donovan. "What have ye done t'her?"

"It's all up; she's got me," replied the harassed butler. "When that little angel lay hovering between this world and the next, it unmanned

me to that extent I swore a solemn oath that if her life was spared, I'd buy the ring before the year was out."

Mrs. O'Donovan gave him a comforting wink. "Don't ye take on. Sure if th' darlin' gets well, the good Lord'll niver howld it against ye at all, at all."

But this reflection brought no comfort to Abraham. "Oh! if it was only the Lord I had to deal with," he lamented, "'Twas Ingeborg herself that registered the vow."

"Well don't ye look on th' dark side of it," said Mrs. O'Donovan, returning to her bandages. "Ye'll soon get so used to't, ye won't know whether ye're married or not."

"No man could forget Ingeborg," said Abraham, shaking his head skeptically. "It's a terrible thing, Mrs. O'Donovan, when matrimony slips up behind a man in an unguarded moment."

"Ye've been married before?" inquired Mrs. O'Donovan.

"I have *not*," replied Abraham emphatically. "I've been side-stepping here and making a detour there around the trap, and all the time the awful moment was drawing nearer at the rate of sixty minutes an hour, and I never suspecting it

at all. Here you stand one minute, a free man, and the next, poof!" — Abraham's hand came down like a snuffer upon a candle — "it's all over, and you're not certain whether you're a hero, or just an ordinary dummed fool like what you've always thought the rest of your married friends was." And Abraham sat down and poked disconsolately at the fire.

Meantime the hard work and strain had begun to tell upon Ingeborg, so when Beulah took her place at the bedside and suggested that Ingeborg go into the outer room to rest a little, she felt quite ready to do so. Her nerves, which she had held in such splendid control during the operation, began to assert themselves, and no sooner had she closed the bedroom door behind her, than she stopped, her features began to work, and drawing out her handkerchief, she burst into a flood of tears.

Both Abraham and Mrs. O'Donovan sprang up, their worst fears aroused, and ran to her; taking her between them, they led her to a chair, begging her to tell them what was the matter.

"Is she worse?" demanded Abraham.

Ingeborg shook her head and managed to gasp

out, "No, she has come out from the ether." But she could say no more; sobs choked her speech.

"Is th' doctor afraid of anything?" cried Mrs. O'Donovan, giving the Swedish damsel a shake as if to loosen the information lodged in her breast.

"No, he is not afraid," murmured Ingeborg, and then another spasm rendered her incoherent again.

"Open your mouth, and tell us," begged Abraham excitedly. "Can't you see we're on the rack? What is it? What is it?" And thus adjured, Ingeborg managed to calm herself sufficiently to say, "She's going to get well." With this announcement, she gave herself up to the unrestrained delights of a good cry.

"Ain't she an' aggravator?" exclaimed the exasperated butler to Mrs. O'Donovan, and turning to the lachrymose one, he demanded, "If she's going to get well, what are you bellering about?"

"I have my feelings," replied Ingeborg; and while this seemed no answer at all to Abraham, as an explanation it appeared perfectly satisfactory to Mrs. O'Donovan, for she opened her arms and received Ingeborg's damp head upon her capacious bosom.

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"Sure, Mr. Abraham, ye don't understand a woman's heart," she remonstrated.

But Abraham gave the fire a vicious rake. "I'd like to know who in common sense could?" he remarked. "When things is so bad, you think daylight ain't never coming again, a woman'll stand up to the guns as if it was May day and all the bands a-playing; and then, by jinks! when it's all over and your mind is just beginning to ease up on you, off she goes like a double-barreled squall."

"Sure ye'll get used to't, whin ye're a married man yerself, dear," chuckled Mrs. O'Donovan, and just then a slight nudge from Ingeborg gave her a hint that she was intruding upon a psychological moment. "Well, I'll just run in and see if I can be a bit of a help t'thim," she said with elaborate tact, as she gathered her bandages together and prepared to depart. But unable to keep her feminine finger entirely out of the pie, she could not resist stopping as she passed Abraham and whispering in his ear, "Don't howld it agin' her that she done ye a good turn in spite of ye. Ivry woman wants t'get married, Mr. Abraham; 'tis what th' good Lord made her for. Sure O'Donovan was th' hard bird t'bag himself,

was he ! but we hadn't been married three months, till I had um that hypnotized, he'd ate right out o' me hand." And she disappeared into the bedroom with sundry encouraging winks in the direction of Ingeborg.

And now Abraham realized that his last defense was gone, and that his hour was close upon him. He gave an uneasy glance at the Swedish maid, whose sobs had ceased, and who was drying her eyes and making her hair tidy at the little mirror on the wall, but quickly looked away again as she came and seated herself on the little sofa in the middle of the room. He gritted his teeth, determined not to start the conversation, but Ingeborg was used to waiting, and at last he could stand it no longer.

"Well, Ingeborg?" he blurted out.

"Well, Abraham?" she returned coyly, and catching his eye, she patted the seat beside her invitingly.

Slowly Abraham rose and took the place at her side. "I suppose you mean to keep me to my word," he began uneasily.

"You must do what you know to be right," answered Ingeborg impersonally, but hastened to add, "You have always been a man of your

word, however you may have fallen short in other directions."

Abraham sighed. "I'm not what you might call a marrying man," he said. "You'll have to give me time to get used to the idea."

"No! no! Life is uncertain — it must be soon," replied Ingeborg gravely. "My greatest wish is to have a grave at Newport when I die, with a large iron fence and 'Misses' on my tombstone." But even the idea of being the instrument that should transmit such comfort to a fellow creature was not able to cheer Abraham.

"And are you not just a little happy, in spite of everything?" asked Ingeborg tenderly, edging up a little closer.

"I can't tell, Ingeborg — I'm clean upset," replied the butler.

Ingeborg felt that as a love scene they were making rather a failure of it, and as Abraham showed no signs of beginning, she decided that it was up to her to precipitate matters. She turned and smiled up into Abraham's face. "But when you made that vow, your voice did not sound unhappy," she cajoled. "You put your arm around my waist."

"Did I?" asked Abraham uncertainly.

"Yes — like that," she replied, and taking his limp hand, she deftly tucked it around her waist as if it had been an apron string. "I'm sure that you felt just a little happy then," she murmured. "Don't you remember?"

"It seems to me the sensations weren't altogether unpleasant — at the time," admitted Abraham, who was beginning to think that perhaps this marrying business had its compensations after all.

"Abraham, is it not customary to — to kiss the — the bride?" she continued, hanging down her head with a vivid blush.

"Is it, Ingeborg?" he asked.

She nodded. "I believe always."

"All right then," answered Abraham with a final sigh, and he took a hasty peck at Ingeborg's cheek. But she was not to be cheated; she promptly returned him a hearty salute, and to Abraham's intense surprise, he found that he rather liked it. Not to be outdone, he took Ingeborg in his arms and gave her a resounding kiss full on the lips.

When Ingeborg at last felt that she must tear herself away and return to her post at Dulcie's

bedside, she wore a satisfied and exalted smile. She felt that long years of patience and perseverance had been rewarded; and that in spite of an exacting position and an arbitrary mistress — for Abraham had flatly stated that nothing would induce him to leave the service where he had been so long — life was somehow good.

As for Abraham, he began to feel an inexplicable pride in the chains that he had just assumed. His straight back seemed to grow a little straighter, and a positive jauntiness came into his walk.

Meeting Dr. Marshall a little while later, he confidentially touched him on the sleeve. "Beg pardon, sir, might I have a word with you?"

The doctor stopped, and watched Abraham who was shifting from one foot to the other and wearing a most sheepish expression.

"What is it, Abraham?" asked the doctor, who had been given a tip as to what was in the air.

"Beg pardon, sir," stammered Abraham; struggling between bashfulness and pride. "I don't suppose you might have noticed that I've had my eye on Ingeborg this some time back? Well, sir — I've won her." And he departed into the hall, leaving the doctor doubled up with laughter on the sofa.

CHAPTER XV

SIGNORA VANNI FIGHTS A GOOD FIGHT

SIGNORA VANNI sat alone in her little flat and thought. When Dulcie was stricken, she had pressed Elvira to her breast with jealous haste, covering the child's eyes with her hand lest even the sight of misfortune should bring its blight upon her, and hurried from the room.

Good Signor Vanni had led Elvira to the little candy store around the corner, to comfort her spirit, still sore from insult and the loss of all the goodies prepared for the party, with a bag of popcorn. But Signora Vanni remained behind to think, and to pray for her neighbor's child. She knew the efficacy of prayer; for had not her own bambina been miraculously restored to health, when even the physician had bidden her to give up hope?

The sight of Beulah's desolation still tore her with sharp pain; she could see her own little one stretched out before her, pale, silent, and slipping steadily away from her beseeching hands, even as

Dulcie's spirit had ebbed out almost beyond the reach of mortal help. The memory of that bitter time came back, and she lived over again those old nights of watching, with their double agony of hope and fear. It was during the sultry New York August, Elvira was in her third summer, and Signora Vanni, looking in her glass one morning, saw smiling at her the almost forgotten face of Giulia Fossetta.

"Come, Giulia," the enticing image seemed to whisper, "You are young and pretty. You've done your duty by the bambina for the past three years; it's time to think of yourself a bit. Other children get on at that age with a nurse. And meanwhile round on the Bowery the footlights are still twinkling, the people still waiting for you, eager to be pleased and cry 'Brava!' and you can dance better than ever you could — I'm sure you can."

All day the voice whispered at her heart, and a day or two later it was reawakened when by chance she met an old acquaintance on the street and fell into gossip of what was doing at the playhouses.

That night when Signor Vanni came home, he found his favorite supper smoking on the table.

It seemed to him that Giulia had never been so vivacious, so entertaining — that is until after the table was cleared and she began to broach the subject that was in her mind. She met with a refusal point blank; the good signor was not going to have his house run by a slatternly servant girl, while his wife gallivanted round the back alleys of theaters. Signora Giulia did not press the point that evening, but she returned to it night after night, until at last the dispute flared up into open quarrel, and she announced her intention of living her own life as she pleased.

The next day she sought out the manager of one of the theaters where she had formerly worked, and the upshot of it was that she was engaged to dance for a week after the season had opened in September.

It was on the very next day that Elvira, who had been looking peaked and thin as the summer wore on, began to sicken and grow feverish. Nevertheless Signora Vanni went out to the Academy and practised her old steps for several hours. When she reached home, the child, whom she had left in the care of a neighbor, was decidedly worse.

Greatly alarmed, she hurried Elvira to bed and

summoned a doctor, who seemed disposed to make light of the case. All next day she watched by the bedside, but on the third day when she fancied that Elvira appeared a little brighter, she got the same neighbor to take her place again, and proceeded to the practise hall of the Academy.

Everything went badly all day; she did not seem to be able to keep her mind on what she was doing, and at last with a strange foreboding, she changed into her street clothes and hastened home.

Her worst fears were realized. In the few hours that she had been gone, Elvira had developed a temperature and was delirious. The doctor now pronounced it a contagious fever, and Giulia went no more to the Academy. With an unfaltering devotion, she watched and nursed her little one, but several times by note she assured the manager that he need have no anxiety about her filling the engagement. A stubborn lump rose in her throat every time she thought of losing this opportunity of taking up her work again, and it seemed to her as if her last chance for youth and all its delights were at stake.

Elvira grew steadily worse; the doctor now shook his head. Signor Vanni could hardly find

the heart to creep away to the shop at morning, and Giulia herself was half distracted. Filled with grief and terror, she tried to pray, but her prayers sounded empty and meaningless to her. She could not open up her soul to God; that stubborn, hard thing lay like a stone upon the door of her heart, and kept it closed and cold.

At last came the day when Elvira lay white and still on the bed, as if even the strength to try and live had gone, and the doctor warned her that human skill could do no more.

Then something seemed to break within the mother's breast. Hastily throwing a shawl around her, she hurried to the good father, poured out the sin that had lain within her, and begged for help. And the good father found comfort for her. A letter was written to the manager that Signora Vanni would dance no more, and clasping in her hand a medallion of the blessed Santa Rita, who brings people what they ask for in sincerity, she returned home.

She placed the medallion on Elvira's neck; and every day for nine long days, she went to the little chapel to repeat the prayer; and every one of those nine days and nights at home she fought doggedly for Elvira's life.

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At last her faith was rewarded. It seemed to her that on the ninth day, a change for the better came, and gradually Elvira was coaxed back to this world from the borderland.

But when Signora Vanni thought to look in her glass again, she gave a sad little cry. Youth had quite vanished in the days and nights of anguish she had passed. .. Giulia Fossetta was no more. But she was not too unhappy, for she still had Elvira; she had given her child life, and now she bequeathed to her the glorious dreams of her own youth.

And to-night in her little room, she lived over these scenes again, and again she struggled with the stubborn heart within her. The medallion lay safe on Elvira's neck; should she take it from her to save another child? Pity and sympathy urged her on, but every time that she thought of approaching Elvira to remove it, dread of what might happen to the unprotected little one held her back.

When at last her husband had taken Elvira out and she was left alone, she prayed as it seemed to her that she had never prayed before; at every sound in the hall, she rushed to the door to learn

the latest bulletin, and when it was grave, it made her feel as if she were a murderess.

At last when the anxious moments came, and doubt and fear were on every face, she could bear it no longer. Hastening down the hall, she met Elvira and her father returning from the candy shop. Quickly unclasping the medallion from the child's neck, she came to Beulah's flat and asked for Mrs. Randolph.

"Scusate, scusate," she said brokenly. "I have com'. I have been ver' bad, missis, but I have com' now." She held out the medallion, and tried to smile encouragingly through her tears. "Take; it is for da littl' one."

But Beulah, her mind dull with suffering, could not understand at first.

"It is for buona fortuna — for da bambina. Put on her neck — it will bring her moocha good," explained Signora Vanni.

"For Dulcie? Oh, you are kind!" cried Beulah.

Signora Vanni shook her head. "Non; I ver' bad. I fear to take da blessed talismano from la carina. But I fight da devil inside, I pray — and I win. I bring my treasure. Giva to da littl' one."

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"No; I couldn't take it," demurred Beulah.
"You feel that it might bring harm to your child."

But Signora Vanni eagerly pressed the little silver circle into Beulah's hand, and on her face was a light that had in it something of the eternal. "We are bot' mot'ers," she said simply. "Da dear God will share da blessing."



"I bring my treasure. Giva to da littl' one."

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CHAPTER XVI

BEULAH CROSSES OVER THE BRIDGE

It seemed to Beulah that she had never known what happiness was until she sat by Dulcie, watching as the effects of the anesthetic wore off and she passed into a sound, natural sleep. Then she remembered that there were other people in the world, and became aware that Dr. Marshall was standing at the head of the bed, looking down at her.

"Doctor, tell me truly," she whispered, "Is she going to get well?"

"Truly, truly," replied the doctor, with his kind smile. "As well and strong as even you would wish to have her. It had to be done; that one ugly little kink of nerve and tissue had to be straightened out. But now it is straight, and, please God! we are going to keep it so."

She rose and went to lean her forehead against the cool panes of the window. Outside a few flakes of Christmas snow had begun to float quietly down in the still night air, and far off overhead gleamed the lights of the great bridge, stretching

out into nothingness. The doctor followed her, and together they looked out for a time, but the silence was too full of unspoken words, and at last the doctor broke it.

"Now what you are both going to do, is to go away," he said, forcing a gaiety into his voice that he did not really feel. "Somewhere where the sky is a real blue, where you can lie out on the grass and let the warm south winds blow away all your troubles."

"Out beyond Camelot?" asked Beulah, with her eyes fixed on the bridge as if it were indeed a road leading to the mysterious future of her life.

"Yes, way — way out beyond," replied the doctor heartily.

But Beulah sighed and came back to reality. "No, it's a beautiful dream," she said. "But it can't come true. There's only one way I could do it, and that is a way I'll never take — I can accept nothing from that woman. I've made my own living, and I'll keep on making it."

"I wasn't thinking of Mrs. Hennaberry," put in the doctor. "I have a two weeks' vacation coming to me in January. Why shouldn't all three of us run down to Old Point for a while? Now isn't that a nice easy gate to green pastures?"

Beulah shook her head decidedly. "No, a blind alley. I am both father and mother in my family. The mill must turn and the grist come in."

"Beulah, don't you see what I'm trying to say to you?" broke out the doctor; but she gave him a look that meant, "We spoke of that before to-day," and went back to the bedside.

The doctor remained at the window, and a wave of bitterness swept over him. There is a selfishness that the dead can exercise as potently as the living, and he was tasting something of it now. If he could have honestly believed that Beulah did not want his love, he knew that he would have had the strength to go on concealing it to the end. Making believe did not come easily to Stewart Marshall; yet through all the years that had followed his first brief meeting with Beulah, he had never until the last few weeks betrayed by word or look anything that would have been unfaithful to his old friend. But neither was he a sentimentalist; he had stood face to face with death too often not to have stripped it of its abracadabra; he knew that often death is not a terrible, but a beautiful thing; and he had come to believe, that among the children of earth, duty well done to the living is of more importance than

many lamentations over those who are no longer here. He longed for words wise and kind enough to make Beulah see that to-day must be lived, and that the time was come to turn her face toward the living present and away from death.

Presently Mrs. O'Donovan came in to take her turn watching, and the doctor began to think that it was time that he should go. He went to find Ingeborg and give her some instructions that she was to follow during the night.

"Do you feel equal to an all-night siege?" he asked, remembering that she had already done good service that evening.

But Ingeborg was bright-eyed and rosy. "I feel just as if I was in heaven," she confided to the doctor, and hurried off to her post. Beulah had wanted to send her home, for she had not relished the idea of the Hennaberry servants remaining in her house, but Ingeborg refused to take either hint or open suggestion. She was determined to make amends to Abraham for her unwarranted suspicions, so she simply smiled and said, "I will remain." And remain she did.

The doctor, left alone in the sitting-room, got slowly into his great coat. "It's better I should

go," he said to himself. "I'll send Clark over to take charge in the morning. He can handle the case now as well as I, and he won't be constantly making himself a nuisance the way I do." He recalled everything that Beulah had ever said to him on the forbidden subject, and could not remember anything that was encouraging. He tried to make himself believe that her wishes and her words ran parallel, but something within refused conviction and told him that it was his right to stay and win out if he could. But he had agreed to remain as a friend; he had tried to play the part of a friend the last few hours, yet he did not feel the part, and he was not a good actor. It was time to go.

Discouraged by contending emotions, he sighed as he began to pull on his coat, when suddenly he felt the overcoat lifted from behind, and slipped into place by someone standing there. He turned and found Beulah smiling up at him.

Ingeborg had informed her that the doctor was about to leave, and Mrs. O'Donovan had urged her not to let him go without a good-night from her.

"Ye're an ijit if ye let 'um get out o' th' house before ye put yer mark on 'um," she rallied

Beulah. "Th' town is just full of captivatin' faymales — an as fer th' trained nurses, I hear there's no resistin' 'um. Take 'um while ye can get 'um, dear."

Beulah hesitated about going to the doctor, for she had often been obliged to run the gamut of Mrs. O'Donovan's wit on the subject, and had often told herself that really the Irish woman did presume, and that if it went on, she would have to rebuke her sharply. But although she assured Mrs. O'Donovan that she was quite willing to resign all share in the doctor to whomsoever wanted him, she very easily allowed herself to be led to the door and pushed into the sitting-room.

When she saw Dr. Marshall dejectedly feeling for the sleeves of his coat, a realization of all that he had done for her swept her to his side.

"You've done so much for us to-night," she said tremulously, "So much that I shall never try to thank you for it."

"Don't thank me," replied the surprised and embarrassed doctor. "What I did for Dulcie wasn't for you — that's just my job in the world."

"Your job! — yes, that's it," said Beulah eagerly, "Your splendid, beautiful job! You told

me it was beautiful this afternoon, and I didn't believe you. But this evening when I saw those strong, skilful hands of yours, I wanted to kiss them and call them beautiful."

"Well, there they are," said the doctor, laughingly holding them out to her.

But she too laughed and shook her head. "Too late," she said. "I was speaking of the doctor's hands — those are the man's."

The doctor looked down at the empty hands and sighed. "Poor old hands! I suppose all my brains have gone into learning how to use them, and yet they don't know enough to get me what I want." He looked at her half jestingly, and half in earnest. "Beulah, I wish that love were some kind of a disease, so that I could operate on you for it. I'll bet I'd make a success of that job."

But she was determined not to let things become serious. "In that case, you'd have to cut it out, wouldn't you?" she asked quizzically.

"No, your case is a dislocation; I'd reset it," replied the doctor. Then something told him that it was now or never, and he decided to make her see things as he did, or accept as final a decision which in every fiber of him he felt to be unjust

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"It's not fair of you to take advantage of me like this," she began. "I'm too tired to resist; if you had waited until to-morrow —"

"Not to-morrow," he answered, "I want you to-day."

"But it's not fair," she objected.

The doctor only laughed. "This is an emergency case; everything's fair," he said persistently. "Go on — say it — I'll never take no for an answer."

And Beulah, looking up right into his honest eyes, suddenly felt all the barriers that she had built around her crumble into nothingness. "Stewart," she said, and there was a happy ring in her voice, "I'm glad you didn't wait until to-morrow."

When Mrs. O'Donovan came out of the bedroom a second later, she stopped still and suppressed a howl of joy. "Excuse me!" she said, making a dive for the door.

The doctor stopped her. "Don't go, Mrs. O'Donovan," he called.

"The Lord perserve us! there's a pair in ivry room!" she chuckled as she returned. As for Beulah, she only took one glance at her prophetic

neighbor, and hurried out of the room as red as a peony.

"Thrust ye doctors fer niver missin' an oppor-chunity," remarked Mrs. O'Donovan, playfully shaking her finger at Marshall. "Consolin' th' afflicted they call it, so they say."

"Mrs. Randolph and I are going to be married," replied the doctor, as proud as a schoolboy.

"Ye niver mean it?" She looked at him in mock astonishment, and he nodded emphatically. "Saints above! it must be wan o' thim disease bugs ye've brought in wid ye!" she exclaimed. "There's a couple in th' nixt room taken wid th' same complaint." And her infectious mirth catching the doctor, they both enjoyed a good laugh together.

"Well I must be runnin' over t'see how me darlin's are contrivin' in me absence," said Mrs. O'Donovan, wiping the tears of laughter from her eyes. "Tell Mrs. Randolph I'll be slapin' in me clothes in case she needs t'call me in th' night."

She unpinned her skirt, smoothed her flying locks, and started for the door, but no sooner had she opened it, than with a cry of "Howly Moses!" she slammed it to again, and burst into another fit of laughter.

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pertection; and look wot she turns around an' hands me. She runs a swell chanet t'live quiet now in dis house — she does *not*."

"Dey got my cornet away from me," lamented Blanche, with belated visions of all that she might have snatched from the ruins if she had only had presence of mind.

"An' look wot her mudder slipped t'de old girl," continued Micky. "De old girl wasn't doin' nuttin'; she was just tryin' t'have a good time — an' look wot she got handed! T'rowed out — dat's wot she got."

"We'll never git a Christmas tree of our own agin," wailed Blanche, who was not at all interested in the ethical side of the question. She burst into tears.

"Shut up, Blawnche," warned her brother. "Ma'll come out here and knock de stuffin' out o' yer."

But the torrent of Blanche's emotions was too strong to be restrained. "An' oh! my Gawd! de ice-cream's all meltin'!" she howled, casting herself in an agonized heap on the floor, while Micky relieved his feelings by kicking the furniture. The knowledge that several quarts of good ice-cream were melting in a can, when they should

have been undergoing that process in a much more personal spot, was indeed hard to bear.

Micky repaired to the hall to gather the latest news, and presently rejoined Blanche, looking important. "I guess she's goin' t'be a deader," he announced, nodding his head judicially.

"She is?" replied Blanche in awe-struck tones.

"Never min'; I guess dere's goin' t'be a funeral, an' dat'll help some," said Micky, hope reviving within him. But envy overspread his sister's countenance. "An' she'll git it!" she said sourly. "Seems like some people git everyting."

"It don't seem fair," admitted her brother. "Fust she's queen o' de party, an' now she's goin' t'git de funeral."

"My! don't you wisht you wuz her?" sighed Blanche.

Micky took another reconnoiter in the hall. "De old girl's walkin' about downstairs an' she's got de old man down dere too," was his next report.

This was so, for Mrs. Hennaberry had found herself in a most trying situation. Feeling the justice of Beulah's resentment, and that she had forfeited her right to a place in her son's household at such a time, she had led Jacob from the room as the only amends that she could make. Just what,

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dis here floor, it's got t'be done up proper," he announced, and by the swelling of his chest, Blanche saw that an idea was in process of evolution.

"Yep," she responded, waiting for the full-grown idea to blossom forth.

"It's up t'us kids t'show we ain't no pikers. You ain't a piker, are yer?" he demanded.

"Nop," responded Blanche concisely.

"Well wot I say is, you know de store on de corner o' Grand Street," Micky went on with an assumption of easy nonchalance. "Dey got de swellest bunch o' funeral wreaths in dis town; flowers, an' ribbons, an' nice sentymments wrote on 'em. Well, one o' dem tings is wot we're goin' t'git fer dis funeral."

"Are we goin' t'steal it?" inquired practical Blanche.

"Nah, ye gink," replied her brother, "we're goin' t'buy it."

"Who's goin' t'give us de money?" asked Blanche bluntly.

"I'll show yer," and getting up on a chair, Micky extracted from the top of the closet a round china orange, which gave forth a coppery chink when he lifted it. This orange was a bank, and

in it from time to time Mrs. O'Donovan deposited stray pennies for the children. "Ye wait till ye git a lot o' thim in there," she said, "an' thin we'll open it an buy ye somethin' grand." But Micky, who knew his mother's love of display, was sure that her full approval would be extended to anything which tended toward the public upholding of the family honor in the neighborhood; so he began a search for the hatchet, and soon the orange lay a mass of splinters on the floor.

Blanche, who had breathlessly watched this masterstroke of high finance, gave a whoop, and fell to gathering the pennies from among the ruins. But a disappointment was in store for them; no amount of recountings would induce the coins to add up to more than seventy-two cents, and on two occasions the count provokingly dropped to seventy-one.

"Dat won't buy no wreath," muttered Micky wrathfully.

"Wot'll we do?" asked Blanche in dismay. To greet her mother with a triumphant wreath gracing the foreground, was one matter, but to face her with a smashed bank and nothing to show for it, was another.

"We got t'git somebody t'go in pardners wid

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us," announced Micky after a period of solemn thought.

"Who'll dat be?" asked Blanche.

"I guess it's got t'be Elvirer," he answered, and Blanche assented with a sigh.

"You wait here, an' I'll go talk t'er," he said, and departed for the Vanni flat.

"It's all right, she's on," he announced, returning a few moments later. "She says dat we orter give it t'de kid," he continued. "She says de kid didn't mean nuttin' actin' dat way; she says she was took awful sick."

"Maybe we had," replied Blanche. "It's her funeral anyway."

"An she did act pretty decent fust off," added Micky. "She was de one, dat got us ast t'de party."

So presently when Elvira arrived, tightly clutching a bright silver half-dollar that Signor Vanni had contributed to the fund, the children departed for Grand Street, chatting as amicably as if the complications of the dance had never come between them.

The shop on Grand Street was just about closing its doors, but the man was finally induced to turn on the lights again and talk the matter over. The

sort of thing to which Micky's hopes aspired was found to be so far beyond their combined means that dismay began to overspread the children's faces. The man tried to make them believe that a simple circle of palm leaves was just what they were looking for, but Micky waved it scornfully aside. "If we can't do de ting up swell, we don't spend de money," he said, and prepared to depart.

Then the shopkeeper had a brilliant idea; from the back of the store he produced a magnificent floral star set upon a stand. It was a trifle soiled and fly-blown from standing in the window, but the children gasped with admiration at the imposing structure, and the fact that inscribed upon it in blue letters were the words "Father — At Rest" detracted not a whit from its propriety for the occasion.

A purchase was speedily effected, and the trio proudly marched down Grand Street bearing their offering with them. At the corner of Jackson Street they were met by practically the entire population of the house. It was a triumphant moment for Micky the Scout, but at the foot of the stairs he stopped and motioned the crowd to fall back. A sense of fitness demanded that the gift

should be made with a certain delicacy impossible to attain before the gaping multitude. Before his prohibitive gesture, the crowd retreated and the children walked upstairs alone.

When they reached the fourth floor, they found Mr. and Mrs. Hennaberry sitting on the steps at the landing before Beulah's door. Henrietta had finally agreed to return home, but not before she had seen the doctor, and had an account of how things were progressing. So they were patiently waiting for someone to come out by whom they could send in a message to Dr. Marshall.

The children stopped on the stairs and held a whispered consultation. "I guess she's feelin' it pretty bad, de way she got it handed t'er," commented Micky.

"It is awful mean to sting her for the party and then not let her come to the funeral," was Elvira's opinion.

The two little girls looked at Micky with an expression that meant that it was up to him to do something about it for since the purchase of the wreath they felt that they owned an interest in the pleasing event.

Micky thought earnestly for a moment, and then he had another inspiration. "I bet if she wuz

t'take dis," he said, pointing to the gaudy stand, "Dey wouldn't dast to keep 'er out."

Blanche gave an indignant sniff as if to scout the very idea of such a proceeding.

"Let's give it t'er; an' den she kin get in," proposed Micky, and the little girls agreeing heartily, Micky marshaled the others, who were carrying the wreath, behind him, so as to conceal the structure until the psychological moment should arrive; then the three advanced upstairs and presented themselves before Mr. and Mrs. Hennaberry.

"Mrs. Godmother," began Micky, swelling out his chest and striking an easy attitude, "Me an' de kids here —"

"We ain't no kids," interrupted Blanche.

"Shut up, Blawnche," said Micky sotto voce. "Wot I would say is," he went on, "Me and dese young ladies here — Elvirer —" Elvira here executed a professional courtesy that was a marvel of grace, considering the narrowness of the stairs, "and Blawnche," continued Micky, "Make a bow, Blawnche."

"I won't," returned Blanche, with a sour look at Elvira.

"Wishin' t'show yer our feelin's on dis — dis

happy ercashion," continued Micky, trying to look unconscious of these interruptions, "an' wishin' t'show yer dat we're sorry we called de young lady names, an' wishin' t'show yer dat we enjoyed yer party —"

"Wot der wuz of it," added Blanche, to her brother's annoyance.

"Shut up, Blawnche," he commanded so sternly that she subsided. "An' wishin' t'show yer dat we want de ting done up proper," he concluded, "we have went and bought dis." And with a nonchalant "Trot it out, girls," he stepped aside and disclosed all the glories of the wreath.

"Dat's it," he said with excusable pride.

"It's most as good as the new ones — if you don't look at it too close," said Elvira rearranging some of the petals, which had become rumped during the journey.

"Oh, I guess dey ain't got much on dat up on Fift' Avenoo," asserted Blanche loftily.

Mrs. Hennaberry put on her glasses and inspected the strange object in amazement. "And what is this for?" she asked.

"Ain't dere goin t'be no funeral?" demanded Micky.

"Certainly not," exclaimed Mrs. Hennaberry,

looking at the children with indignation, but Micky turned away with a resentment equal to her own.

"Ain't dat tough!" he cried in despairing accents. "Fust dey bust up de party, an' now no funeral!"

Then he saw that Mrs. Hennaberry did not understand, and he tried to make her see the gravity of the situation. "It's wot I call ungrateful," he explained. "She ought t'be glad t'git de chanct of a swell funeral."

Mrs. Hennaberry entirely misunderstood. "You horrid children!" she said. "What makes you hate Dulcie so?"

Micky the Scout turned a surprised face. "We don't hate 'er," he said. "She's a nice kid."

"What would I spend my money on her for, if I hate her?" asked matter-of-fact Elvira.

"Then why did you get that?" asked Mrs. Hennaberry, pointing to the wreath.

"'Cause we wanted t'show dat we like her," replied Micky. "An' now we're goin' t'give 't'you, so's dey can't keep yer away from de funeral."

A light broke on Mrs. Hennaberry. "Then you don't want Dulcie to go away and leave us?" she asked.

This phase of the matter had never occurred

to Micky before. "Sure we don't," he responded heartily. "She's a nice kid."

Mrs. Hennaberry suppressed a chuckle. "I see," she said. "You were only angry because you didn't want to miss the funeral."

"You got it."

"And you don't want this handsome wreath to go to waste?" continued Mrs. Hennaberry, pointing to the imposing edifice.

"Signs o' human intelligence at last," murmured Micky thankfully.

"Well, Michael Dennis, I'll tell you what I'll do," said Mrs. Hennaberry. "I'll buy that wreath from you. How much was it?"

"A dollar and twenty-two cents," piped up three small voices in chorus.

Mrs. Hennaberry drew a two-dollar bill out of her purse and gave it to them. "You needn't give me any change," she said. "Now you haven't lost anything, and your good intentions are just as much appreciated as if we could have used the wreath."

"Ain't she a slick old girl?" cried Micky, and he grabbed the wreath and held it out to her. "Y'aint gettin' stung," he assured her. "It's cheap at de price."

"Gracious me! I don't want the thing," exclaimed Mrs. Hennaberry, pushing it from her. "Take it away."

"We git de money *and* de wreath?" gasped Micky, almost unable to believe his ears.

"Yes. Only take it away," repeated Mrs. Hennaberry.

"Come on, kids," cried the exultant Scout, and they bore the wreath downstairs to make a triumphant tour of the neighborhood.

But before he left, Micky turned to fling a parting assurance to Mrs. Hennaberry. "I guess it won't be wasted maybe," he said. "Dere's a kid down in de next block wot's got de whoopin' cough, an' p'raps we kin have it on him."

CHAPTER XVIII

MRS. HENNABERRY BOTH SUBMITS AND CONQUERS

"WHY, Mr. and Mrs. Hennaberry! What are you doing out there?" asked the amazed doctor, when he had recovered his breath.

"What do you think we are doing — listening to 'Il Trovatore'?" returned Mrs. Hennaberry tartly.

"But aren't you cold?" inquired the doctor.

"Cold!" echoed Mrs. Hennaberry ironically. "No, it's as warm as Palm Beach out here in the hall." And then her anxiety burst through her habitual crustiness. "I don't care whether I'm cold or not. Doctor, how *is* that child?"

"Splendid — splendid — everything went finely," came the hearty response.

"Then she is going —"

"To get well? Please heaven! yes."

Mrs. Hennaberry fairly beamed. "Now isn't that wonderful, Jacob, isn't that perfectly wonderful!" she sighed happily as she tried to rise,

but sitting for half an hour on a chilly stair is not the best thing in the world for ancient bones. "Jacob," she exclaimed, "I believe I've lost the use of my left leg."

"Why don't you come in and get warm at the stove?" suggested Dr. Marshall.

"No, I can't do that," replied Mrs. Hennaberry, shaking her head decidedly.

"Why not?" asked the doctor.

"I was turned out," said Mrs. Hennaberry.

But shivering Mr. Hennaberry felt differently on the subject. "My dear," he put in, "I think perhaps we'd better go in and get warm."

His very voice sounded frozen, and instantly Mrs. Hennaberry was all contrition. "You poor, dear Jacob!" she cried, turning his face toward the light for an inspection. "Why, doctor, he's fairly blue around the gills," she announced.

She gently pushed him into the room. "Go, take a chair, and place it back of the stove," she advised, and Mr. Hennaberry needed no urging to comply. Mrs. Hennaberry stood for a moment in the doorway, looking meditatively and not inappreciatively in the direction of the fire. "Doctor, there must be some scientific reason why it is always warmer back of stoves than in

front of them," she observed. And then suddenly her fortitude gave way. "I think I'll have to come in," she admitted, and hurried to the fire.

Jacob rose gallantly to offer his seat behind the stove, but she waved him back. "No, Jacob, I have unbent enough," she said. "I will sit here." And she sat down in the rocker in front of the stove.

"Dear me!" she sighed. "I never thought that I would live to see the day when I would enter a house that I had been turned out of!"

Then she took off her glasses, and warmed her hands at the fire. "Doctor, haven't you some medicine for chills, or something that will warm me up?" she asked.

At the words Mrs. O'Donovan was at her side. "Faith! I've th' bist medcin' in th' world roight here in me pocket. I slipped it in, thinkin' we moight use it at th' party; but 'tis th' useful stuff, an' fits becomin' into almost any situation, mournful or hilarious." And reaching down into the pocket of her skirt, she produced a small brown flask of something that she was wont to refer to as "th' paralyzer."

"Mrs. O'Donovan, I am a member of the Temperance League," replied Mrs. Hennaberry,

turning a severe countenance upon her, but Mrs. O'Donovan was no whit abashed.

"Sure that's what they all say," and slipping the flask into Mrs. Hennaberry's amazed fingers, she whispered, "Niver say a word about it, dear. Good-night! Good-night!" And she went chuckling down the hall, leaving Mrs. Hennaberry in such a state of indignation that she could find no words to express herself.

When she turned back to her husband, to her consternation, she beheld him in the very act of taking a sip from the obnoxious bottle, of which he had relieved her.

"Jacob!" she cried, and he hastened to put it away on the mantelpiece. Then she looked apologetically at the doctor. "I suppose it does make people warmer," she said reflectively. "Doctor, to be cold and hungry oneself makes a person think."

"That is what suffering of all kinds is good for," replied the doctor. "It is a knife to cut out the hard places in our hearts."

"Yes, I see," she nodded softly.

"Come, Henrietta, we must be going," interrupted Mr. Hennaberry rising. "We know about the child, and there is nothing left for us to do."

But Mrs. Hennaberry shook her head. "No, Jacob; I'm back here in her house again. If I leave it, if I let this night pass over my head, I'm lost."

She rose and looked inquiringly in the direction of the bedroom. "Where is she? I'll go to her," she said.

But the doctor was before her. "Wait," he said. "I think it better that she should come out here to you." And he hurried into the bedroom.

Mrs. Hennaberry seated herself upon the sofa, and lapsed into deep reflection. Mr. Hennaberry watched her for a few moments in silence, and then sitting down beside her, patted her hand encouragingly.

"Jacob," she said thoughtfully, "I've done a lot of thinking during the last few hours."

"Have you, Henrietta?" replied her husband.

"We've lived too much by ourselves — too much for ourselves," continued Mrs. Hennaberry. —

"I've often felt something of the kind," assented Mr. Hennaberry. "But how do you mean to remedy it?"

"Flora's children are growing up; we must do something for them," said Mrs. Hennaberry slowly. "And these people that we have seen to-day; they need help." Then a soft smile stole over Mrs. Hennaberry's face. "I want a child's voice in my house," she said.

Mr. Hennaberry looked at her incredulously; he was finding it hard to get used to this new phase of Henrietta. "I'm afraid you couldn't get Dulcie, unless you took Beulah too," he reminded her.

"What else did you think I meant?" snapped Mrs. Hennaberry, as if ashamed of her momentary display of weakness.

"You will overlook what she said to you?" asked Mr. Hennaberry, unable to believe his ears.

"I liked her for it." Here Mrs. Hennaberry turned and fixed a stern eye upon her husband. "Jacob, if I had had someone to stand up to me thirty years ago, it would have been better for the entire family."

And Mr. Hennaberry, after clearing his throat several times, was obliged to admit, "Henrietta, I believe you are right; my dear, I'm afraid I have been to blame."

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Beulah came out of the bedroom, but stopped short on seeing who was waiting for her. "Excuse me, I thought that I had made it plain that I have nothing further to say to Mrs. Hennaberry," she said.

Mrs. Hennaberry immediately began to ruffle up at the hostile tone. "Indeed!" she said. "Well, I have several things to say to you." Then in a more pacific voice she added to her husband, "Take the doctor out; I wish to speak with Beulah alone."

Beulah's breath was coming rapidly, and an angry light was in her eyes. "I should prefer not. Good-night, Mrs. Hennaberry," she said, and started to return to the bedroom. But Henrietta's opposition was aroused too, and she determined to be heard.

"Very well, go if you like," she said. "But understand one thing: I don't budge out of this house until I have said what I have to say." And she took off her wrap, and sat down with a determination that would have required an earthquake to shake.

"You'd better get the ordeal over," whispered Dr. Marshall to Beulah in what he supposed to be a confidential tone.

"I heard what you said, doctor," cried Mrs. Hennaberry immediately. "He's quite right," she added, for Beulah's benefit.

The two men went out together, and Mrs. Hennaberry was left looking at Beulah's antagonistic back which she had turned on her mother-in-law.

"Well?" said Mrs. Hennaberry at last, not knowing how to begin the conversation.

"Well?" returned Beulah with equal abruptness.

"Aren't you going to say something?" asked Mrs. Hennaberry.

"I am not here to talk, but to hear what you have to say — before you go," replied Beulah.

Mrs. Hennaberry looked annoyed. "Now please don't rub me up the wrong way," she remonstrated. "I want to do the right thing by you and Dulcie."

"The right thing!" echoed Beulah indignantly.

"Yes, I do. Perhaps I haven't been fair to you in the past — in fact I haven't — I admit that. But that is over now. I want you and Dulcie to take your proper place in my household." She waited for a moment, but Beulah did not reply. "Well, what do you say to it?"

"Simply that I refuse positively and definitely," answered Beulah.

"Indeed! Positively — and definitely! Indeed!" exclaimed Mrs. Hennaberry, who was finding it a more difficult task than she had realized to keep her temper.

"Beulah, don't let's quarrel," she was able to continue after a moment which she devoted to swallowing her wrath. "Think better of my offer, if only for Dulcie's sake."

"Yes, I realize that it is for Dulcie's sake," returned Beulah. "You want to get her away from me."

"It isn't only for Dulcie," urged Mrs. Hennaberry. "I am asking you to take your position openly as my daughter."

"And suppose I don't choose to accept this position, as you call it? Suppose I don't look on it as such an honor? Suppose I tell you that I despise it, just as much as I do —"

"Don't say it, Beulah," cried Mrs. Hennaberry, interrupting her. "Don't make me lose my temper. I don't want to have any hard feeling here to-night."

"And what of the years back of us, and between us?" asked Beulah bitterly. "Do you think

that they can be wiped out in a single night? Do you think that a few petty commonplaces can make up for all the years of wretchedness that you have heaped on me?"

"I didn't understand," murmured Mrs. Hennaberry.

"I was only a girl who had to work for a living," continued Beulah, "an actress, not good enough for *your* son. I suppose you thought I wasn't even moral. Well, I've kept myself decent, and I've kept Dulcie decent, and I'm quite capable of continuing to do so. And if you ask me, I think I'm far more decent than you are."

"Beulah," began Mrs. Hennaberry, but the younger woman cut her short. "Please don't call me Beulah," she said. "I don't like it," and walked away to the window.

Mrs. Hennaberry grew scarlet in the face. She had never felt anger more keenly in her life, for never before had she been obliged to control herself. She realized the necessity of keeping back the bitter words that rose to her lips, but it was equally necessary to do something to give vent to her feelings, if she was not to explode.

Marching to the door, she called, in a suppressed whisper, "Ingeborg! Ingeborg!"

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"Yes, madame," replied the Swedish damsel, appearing in the doorway, wreathed in smiles.

"Ingeborg, you're a fool! Now go back into the other room," said her mistress, and Ingeborg, quite unruffled, disappeared again.

Mrs. Hennaberry now felt equal to continuing the conversation with her daughter-in-law. "Beulah, I'm not going to let you quarrel with me," she said, coming to her. "Can't you see my side just a little? Remember, I didn't know you. You may not think it, but the world I live in is a narrow world; I thought my son was ruining his life."

"But afterwards?"

"Afterwards! Well, it isn't easy to unsay things when once they are said. It isn't easy to accept things you've once rejected — even when the heart is aching to; something stops you."

"Pride?"

"I suppose so."

"Well, my pride is all that I have left now," replied Beulah, hardening herself. "You've set me a good example all these years; I'll follow it."

"I'm setting you a new one to-night," said Mrs. Hennaberry contritely. "My pride is humbled; make your own terms."

But the word was an unhappy one. "Terms!" cried Beulah sharply. "You haven't enough money to buy me."

Mrs. Hennaberry tried to explain, but the other went on without heeding her, "You can buy anything else on earth you want, but your money cannot buy my pride."

"My money!" exclaimed Mrs. Hennaberry bitterly. "Do you know what my money has brought me? Just exactly nothing. Money shrivels up the soul until it is small, and that is what it has done to mine." The tears stood in her eyes, and against her will, pity began to stir in Beulah's breast. "I tried to buy people with money and presents, but my soul was too small to pay the honest price that love demands," continued Mrs. Hennaberry.

"Oh! please — please!" cried Beulah, feeling that if she listened any longer, she could not retain the power to hold out against the hungry longing that was in Mrs. Hennaberry's eyes. She tried to turn away, but Mrs. Hennaberry clung to her arm, and with a break in her voice that went straight to Beulah's heart, pleaded, "Beulah, can't you see what the matter with me is? I've been wanting love all my life — and I

don't know how to ask for it. And to-day, when Dulcie put her little arms around my neck, she gave it to me. Don't take that love away from me — don't — please." And Beulah suddenly found that her arms were around the old woman, and that she was murmuring, "I won't, my dear — I won't."

When Dr. Marshall and Mr. Hennaberry returned to the room, they found the two women chatting together between smiles and tears.

"May we come in?" asked the doctor.

"Yes, it's all right," answered Mrs. Hennaberry. "Isn't it splendid! Beulah and Dulcie are coming to live with us, and by-and-by we'll have another Christmas party."

But Beulah in great embarrassment, interrupted. "Wait! You may not want us. You see — Dr. Marshall — I —" She did not know how to go on, and the doctor had to come to the rescue.

"Well you see it's this way," he explained. "I'm an awfully expensive doctor, and Beulah is too poor to pay my fee, so unless she escapes the law by becoming my wife, I may make things very uncomfortable for her."

Mrs. Hennaberry looked from one to the other.

"I see," she remarked. "So Dr. Marshall was *the* man after all! I told Ingeborg that there was someone." Then she opened her arms, and gathered them both to her. "Jacob, isn't it splendid!" she cried. "We have a new son too." "God bless my soul!" exclaimed Mr. Hennaberry, who really could not keep pace with events that moved so rapidly.

And now Beulah felt that she had been away from her post quite long enough, and taking the doctor's hand, she drew him into the inner room.

"Look!" she pantomimed to the old couple, and folded back the screen that stood before the bed.

By the dim lamplight, they could see Dulcie sleeping peacefully, with one cheek pressed to that of the faithful Guinevere, whose battered form was tightly clasped in her arms.

Together the grandparents stood looking at the happy group in the bedroom. "Ah, Jacob, those are the things that count," sighed Mrs. Hennaberry.

Silence stole over the little home, but outside the Christmas bells were ringing, and the old couple crossed to the window to look out over the quiet city. The river was still, a few flakes

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of snow floated down through the night air, and overhead stretched the lights of the great bridge.

"Christmas is coming in," said Jacob Henna-berry.

"Good will and peace," answered his wife.

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